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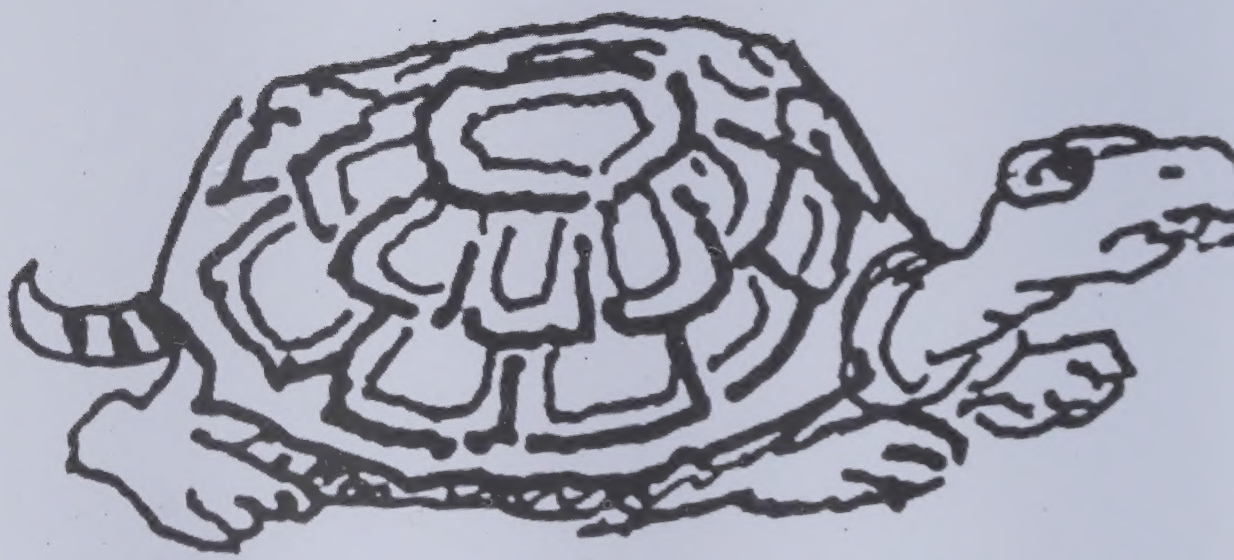
Read Me A Story!

Magic Mango and many other stories from Asia and the Pacific

Asian/Pacific Copublication Programmes (ACP) Series

READ ME A STORY!



Asia/Pacific Copublication Programme

Read Me A Story!

Magic Mango and many other stories from Asia and the Pacific

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Papua New Guinea

THE MAGIC MANGO

by
RAY O'FARRELL

Once upon a time a mango grew on the top of a very tall mango tree. It was not like our mangoes. Oh, no! This was a magic mango. It could think and talk.

From the top of the tall mango tree, the magic mango could see many things. It could see the village down by the river. It could see the mountains a long way away, and down past the village it could see the sea.

"I wish I could get down off this tree," thought the magic mango. "I want to travel around and have a good look at those places."

But the poor magic mango could not leave the tree.

One day, the wind blew very strongly on the mango tree. The top of the tree moved back and forth.

Suddenly, the magic mango fell off the tree—down, down to the ground.

The magic mango was not hurt. It lay on the grass for a while. Then it thought, "Well, I'm off the tree. Now I can move around the world."

The magic mango began to roll along the ground. It rolled down the hill towards the village. Near the village, the magic mango met a pig.

"Hey! Stop!" Said the pig. "I want to eat you!" But the magic mango laughed and sang this little song—

"I'm a magic mango,
you can't catch me.
I'm off to look at
the world, you see!"

The magic mango rolled faster and faster, and the pig ran along after it. Near the village, a little boy saw the mango.

"Hey! Stop!" Shouted the boy. "I want to eat you!" But the magic mango laughed and sang the little song again—

"I'm a magic mango,
you can't catch me.
I'm off to look at
the world, you see!"

The magic mango rolled faster and faster, and the pig and the little boy ran along after it.

They ran through the village gardens where some people were working. Two women looked up and saw the magic mango.

"Hey! Stop!" Said the women. "We want to eat you!" But the magic mango laughed and sang its little song—

"I'm a magic mango,
you can't catch me.
I'm off to look at
the world, you see!"

The magic mango rolled faster and faster. The pig,

the little boy and the two women ran along after it.

Suddenly a hungry hunter saw the magic mango.

"Hey! Stop!" Shouted the hunter. "I want to eat you!" But the magic mango laughed and sang again—

"I'm a magic mango,
you can't catch me.
I'm off to look at
the world, you see!"

The magic mango rolled faster and faster. The pig, the little boy, the two women and the hungry hunter ran along after it.

On and on they ran, until at last the magic mango began to feel tired.

It looked for a place to rest. It rolled into some long grass and hid there. The pig, the little boy, the two women and hunter couldn't find the mango. Soon they went home.

The magic mango was very tired. It went to sleep. It slept for many days. When it woke up the sun was shining on it and it was nice and warm. "I think I'll stay here for a while," thought the magic mango.

Many days went by. One day some tiny green shoots began to grow from the magic mango.

Do you know what had happened? Yes, the magic mango was growing into a tree!

Illustrated by MARLON KUELINAD

India

MATSYA, THE BEAUTIFUL FISH

by
SHANTA RAMESHWAR RAO

Matsya was a beautiful fish who lived in the ocean.

He was so tiny that you could hardly see him, but he was the happiest fish in the world. Then, one day a big cruel fish saw him and thought, "That fish is tiny, yes, but oh, he must be good to eat!"

He went after Matsya, but Matsya dived down through the water and hid among the seaweed and rocks. Matsya was clever, yes, but he was scared.

Another day a fish with long pointed teeth nearly got Matsya, but the little fellow managed to slip away again.

"What shall I do!" Cried Matsya. "The big fish want to eat me up, and I don't want to be eaten up. I want to live and play and grow. I must find some way to save myself."

Matsya swam and swam until he came to the ocean's edge.

There he met Manu, the fisherman. Matsya told Manu his story.

"If I continue to live in the ocean, I will surely die," said Matsya.

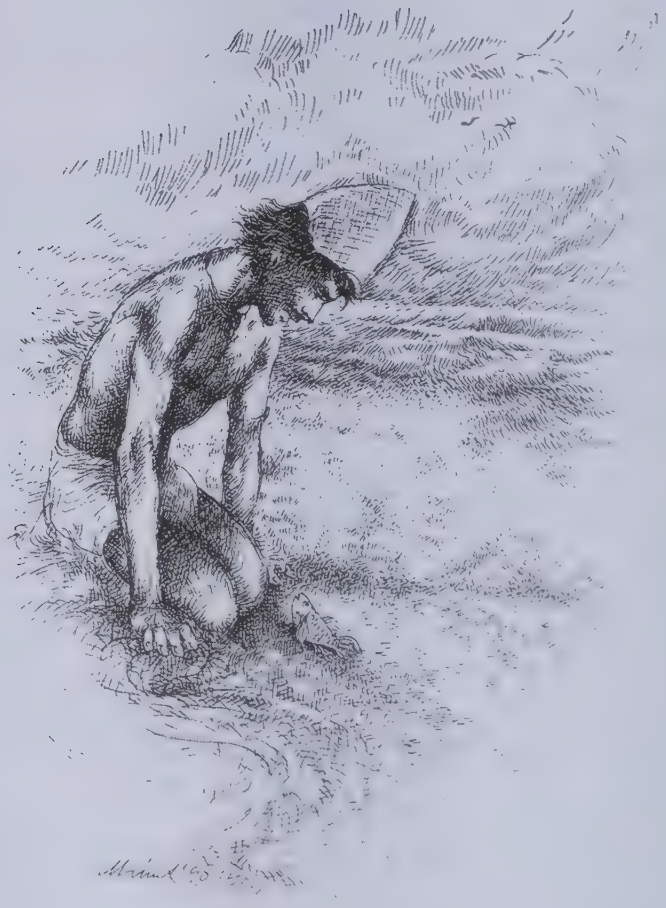
"Oh, we must not let you die!" Said Manu. He took Matsya in the hollow of his hand with some water for him to swim in.

Now Matsya was happy again. Manu's wife Manushi put him in a bowl of water, and his children helped look after him.

Everyday Manu fed Matsya, and Matsya grew bigger and stronger and wiser and more beautiful.

One day he filled the bowl completely!

Then Manu and his family made a little pool for Matsya. Matsya swam about in the waters of the pool, in and out among the water lilies.



Every day Matsya grew bigger, stronger, wiser and more beautiful. One day he filled the whole pool.

Then Manushi took him to a lake in the hills. Matsya played about happily in the lake. Every day he grew bigger, stronger, wiser, and more beautiful. Soon he filled all the lake.

Then Manushi took him to the river. The river was deep and wide. Matsya swam and played about happily in it, and every day he grew. He became big, strong, very wise and very beautiful.

Time passed.

One day when Manu and his family came to visit Matsya, he swam up and said in a voice loud as thunder, "Listen! Something terrible is going to happen. The river will rise up in a mighty flood. There will be clouds and rain, and the waters will rush and roar over the earth. Houses will fall and fields will be flooded."

"Is there no way to save ourselves?" Asked Manu.

"I'll tell you what you must do," said Matsya. "You and your friends must build a boathouse. Inside it you will be safe."

When Manu and Manushi told their friends what Matsya had said, they laughed. "Nonsense!" They said. "Go away! We won't listen to your silly stories or build any boathouses."

So Manu and his family worked hard and built their boathouse all by themselves.

Soon afterwards, just as Matsya had said, there was a great flood. Dark clouds covered the face of the sun and the rain fell. Lightning flashed. Thunder crashed. It rained and it rained. The rain filled the pools and

lakes and rivers. It rushed over the land. Houses fell down and fields were flooded.

"Help!" Cried the people. "We are drowning. Our animals are drowning. Everything is drowning. Help!" Only Manu and his family sat inside their boathouse and were safe.

"Please open the doors of your boathouse and take us in," begged the people, "or we will all drown."

So Manu opened the doors, and the friends all came in.

Then all the animals and birds and other living creatures cried out, "Please take us in too, Manu." So Manu let them in. Days passed, weeks passed while the boathouse went bobbing over the flood waters. There was no land to be seen anywhere. Everyday they looked out of the boathouse, but everything was under water and water was everywhere.

Months passed. Manu and his family looked after everyone. "Don't be afraid," Manu told them.

Then one day a little bird looked out of the window and saw something big and bright and beautiful in the water.

"Look," she cried, "There's an enormous fish riding over the flood waters."

"Why," cried Manu, "It's Matsya! He's grown, and he's bigger than the hills and mountains."

"Matsya, Matsya," shouted everyone. "Come and save us!"

Matsya came swimming up to them. Oh! There was a horn on his head. "Tie the boat to my horn and I will take you to dry land," he said in his thundering voice.

Matsya pulled the boathouse for many days. Then

the rain grew less and the flood waters went down. They reached an island. "I have brought you safely through the flood to this island," Matsya told them. "You must make this your home."

So everyone trooped out of the boathouse.

"Where's Matsya?" Asked a little child, and everyone echoed, "Where's Matsya gone?"

Then from far, far away came Matsya's voice. "The ocean is my home. That is where I came from and that is to where I must return."

"Come back, Matsya! Come back!" Cried the people. "Don't leave us, beautiful Matsya."

"I'll come back," replied Matsya, from far, far away. "But not now, not now, not now. Some day when you need me again I'll come back. I promise!"

And they saw Matsya grow smaller and smaller until he disappeared into the ocean.

Illustrated by MRINAL MITRA

Japan

THE MAGIC DRUM

by
MOMOKO ISHII

Once upon a time, there lived in a Japanese village a man named Gengoro. Gengoro had a magic drum. When he beat one side of the drum, saying, "Long be the nose, long be the nose!" The nose became long. When he beat the other side of the drum, saying, "Short be the nose, short be the nose!" The nose became short. This drum was not to be used just for fun. It was for making people happy.

Gengoro would beat the drum for those who wanted their noses a little longer, or those who wanted their noses a little shorter, and thus he made many people happy.

Now, Gengoro was by nature very curious. As time went by, he began to wonder how long a human nose could be stretched. On one fine day, he went out into the field with his drum and beat it—don-doko, don-doko—saying, "Long be my nose, long be my nose!"

Immediately, Gengoro's nose began to stretch. Soon his nose was as long as his arms. Gengoro kept

on beating—don-doko, don-doko—saying, "Long be my nose, long be my nose!"

His nose became as long as a pole, but Gengoro did not stop. He beat the drum and repeated, "Long be my nose, long be my nose!"

Soon his nose became even longer than a clothes rod. It became so heavy that he could not stand on his feet any longer. He laid himself down on the ground with his nose toward the heavens and kept on beating the drum.

Don-doko, don-doko—"Long be my nose, long be my nose!"

His nose stretched and stretched and stretched. It became higher than the trees, higher than the mountains, and the top of the nose disappeared into a white cloud.

Just at that time in Heaven; carpenters were making a bridge over the River of Heaven*. Gengoro's nose appeared right on the spot where an old carpenter was fixing the railing of the bridge. The carpenter had no idea that this was a man's nose. He thought it was one of the sticks he was using, and so, with a piece of string, he tied it firmly to the railing of the bridge.

Well, there was Gengoro on the ground. He felt something wrong with his nose. Though he was still beating the drum, his nose was not stretching anymore. Besides, he felt an itch on the top of his nose.

"I'd better shorten my nose and see what has happened," he said to himself. This time he beat the other

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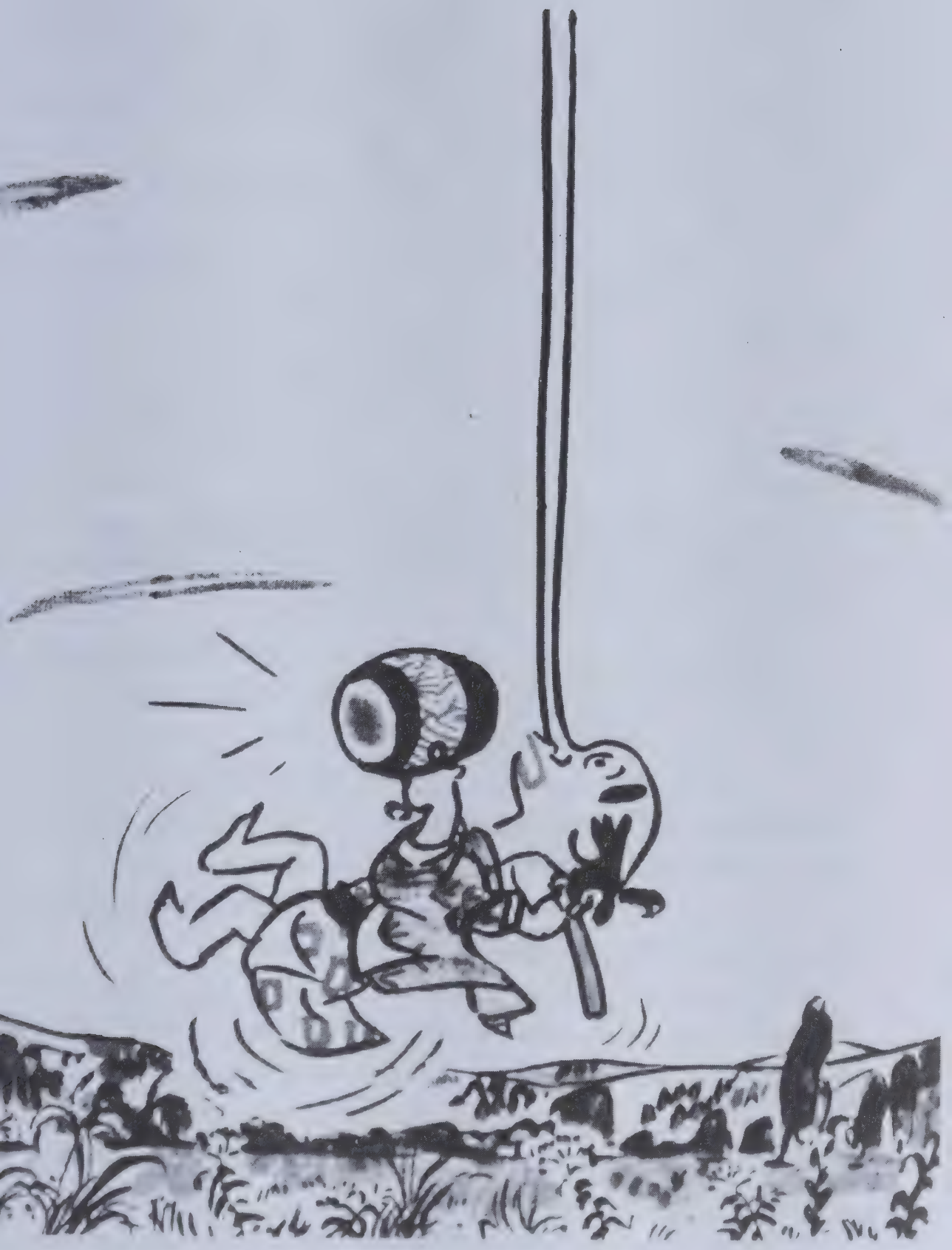
* River of Heaven: the Milky Way



side of the drum saying, "Short be my nose, short be my nose!"

But, alas... Do you remember that Gengoro's nose was fastened to the railing of the bridge? Well, when his nose began to shrink, instead of his nose coming down, his body began to go up!

"Good heavens!" He cried. "Somebody is trying to steal my nose. I must hurry."

Don-doko-don-doko-don-doko... He beat the drum for dear life.

When he finally reached Heaven, nobody was to be seen around the River of Heaven*. It was noon, and the carpenters must have all gone home for lunch. Gengoro found out what had been done to his nose.

"Well! Somebody mistook my nose for a stick of wood. What a stupid man!" He said. He untied his nose and massaged it back into good shape.

Now he felt much better. Oh, but without that long, long nose, how could he get back to the earth? He looked down from the bridge, puzzled.

At that very moment, the white cloud beneath the bridge opened, and through the rift he saw a blue lake way down below. Suddenly he felt dizzy.

"Oooooops!" He fell from the bridge and tumbled down head over heels through the sky.

Gengoro fell into a big lake called Lake Biwa in the country of Omi. He tried very hard to swim, but something was wrong with his body. He had lost his arms and legs. Instead, he now had a small fin and a tail. His mouth and nose had become pointed like a fish! Yes, he had turned into a fish.

This was Gengoro's punishment for using the

drum just for fun. If you go to Lake Biwa today, you will see many little fish like this. They are called Gengoro fish*.

Translated by KYOKO MATSUOKA

Illustrated by KON SHIMIZU

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* Gengoro fish: a water beetle

(From *Fushigi na Taiko* published by Iwanami Shoten Publishers)

Iran

THE UNINVITED GUESTS

by
FARIDEH FARJAM

Once upon a time, there lived an old woman in a small village. Her little house had a yard the size of a sieve, and in it there was a tree the size of a match stick.

The old woman was kind and all the children liked her very much.

One evening, just as the sun disappeared on the horizon and dusk entered the houses, the old woman lighted her lamp and put it on the window sill. She covered herself with her veil and went outside to get a breath of air, talk to her neighbours and relax.

While she was talking with some children, it started to rain very lightly. The pleasant smell of mud walls dampened by the rain scented the air.

The old woman went back inside her small house.

It began to shower.

The old woman felt cold, and had just decided to spread her bed on the floor when there was a knock on the door. Knock, knock, knock!

The old woman said to herself, "Oh, dear! Who

could it be at this time?" She covered herself with her veil, and called from behind the door, "Who's knocking at the door?"

"It's me, Miss Sparrow. I'm getting wet in the rain. Open the door, please."

The old woman opened the door and said, "Come in."

Rain drops rolled off of the sparrow's beak—drip, drip, drip.

She flapped her wings—flap, flap, flap.

The old woman led the sparrow to the room and put a cloth over her wet wings.

The sparrow was scratching her wings with her beak when again they heard a knock at the door. Knock, knock, knock!

The old woman ran out again and asked, "Who's knocking at the door?"

"It's me, Short-legged Hen. I'm getting wet in the rain. Open the door, please."

The old woman opened the door and said, "All right, come in."

The hen's feathers were stuck together, her tired eyes expressionless. The old woman put a cloth over the hen's back. The hen moved to one side of the room and shook herself to get dry.

The old woman had hardly taken off her wet veil when, again, she heard someone knocking at the door. Knock, knock, knock!

The old woman without hesitation ran to the door and asked, "Who's knocking at the door?"

"It's me, Mr. Crow. I'm getting wet in the rain. Open the door, please."

The old woman opened the door and said, "All right, come in."

The knock on the door came again, and this time a cat entered. When the sparrow, the hen and the crow saw her coming in, they huddled together and began to shiver from fear.

The cat smiled and said, "Don't be frightened, we're all guests here and we have to make the best of it."

So they relaxed and began to doze off.

The old woman put a cloth on the cat's back, too. The cat stretched out in a corner, closed her eyes and began to wash her face and paws.

The old woman went to sit down, when again—knock, knock, knock!

The old woman knew what to do. She put on her

veil, went out to the door and asked, "Who's knocking at the door?"

"It's me, Watch Dog. I'm getting wet in the rain. Open the door, please."

The old woman opened the door and said, "You come in, too."

The dog's teeth were chattering—click, click, click.

The old woman showed him into the room. She tied a scarf around his neck and led him aside to lie down.

At this moment, the knocking at the door was louder than before. Knock, knock, knock!

The old woman went to the door and asked, "Who's knocking at the door?"

"It's me, Black Bull. I am getting wet in the rain. Open the door, please."

The old woman opened the door and said, "All right, you come in, too."

The bull first lowered his horns to pass through the door, then squeezed himself into the room.

When the others saw the bull they moved around to make room for him. The sparrow giggled at it all.

The bull coughed and knelt down in a corner.

The old woman brought a blanket and covered the bull. Then she faced her guests and said, "Very well, you can all sleep comfortably, and tomorrow morning go back to your homes."

The sparrow, the hen and the crow jumped up on to the window sill and went to sleep. The cat, the dog and the bull slept on the floor.

The old woman was tired. She pulled her quilt over herself and went to sleep.

The next morning, the old woman woke up later than usual, but when she opened her eyes she saw that everyone was busy. The crow lit the samavar* and put it on the cloth. The cat was making tea. The dog was sweeping the yard. The bull was smoothing the wet roof with a stone roller and the hen was helping him.

The old woman was happy to see all the activity in her little house. She put on her veil and went to buy bread.

When the old woman returned to the house, they all sat down around the samavar and had breakfast. While they drank their last cup of tea, the bull said, "Last night we had no place to go, but now we must excuse ourselves and leave."

All of the guests, realizing how kind the old woman had been to them, were sad about leaving.

The old woman said, "If you want to know what's in my heart, I wish that you could all stay here, but my house is small and I don't have enough room. Even if Miss Sparrow could stay, the rest of you would have to leave."

The bull sat thinking, and then said, "I can moo and thresh wheat for you. Do you want me to leave?"

The old woman, realizing that she had hurt the bull's feeling, said, "Although there is little room, stay here with me."

The sparrow cleared her throat and said, "I can tweet and lay small eggs for you. Do you want me to leave?"

The old woman smiled and said, "You don't take

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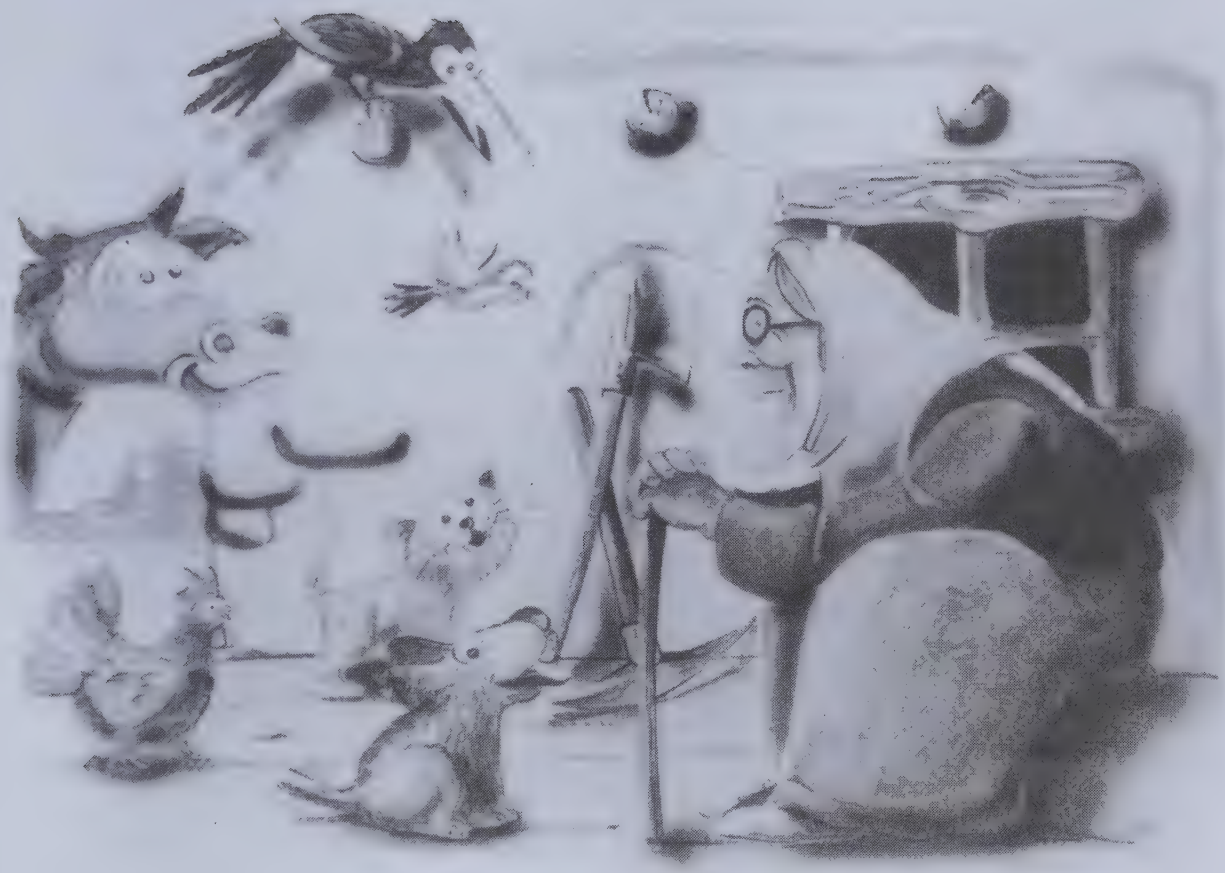
* Samavar: an urn for boiling water for making tea



up much room, so stay."

The cat curled her tail around herself and said, "I can meow and catch mice for you. Do you want me to leave?"

The old woman said, "Dear Pussy Cat, don't worry, you can stay too."

The crow said, "I can caw and wake people for you. Do you want me to leave?"

The old woman said, "You can stay, too."

The hen said, "I can cluck and lay big eggs for you. Do you want me to leave?"

The old woman said, "You too can stay."

The dog said, "I can 'bark' and chase away thieves

for you. Do you want me to leave?"

The old woman said, "It doesn't matter, you also may stay." Then she gave each of her guests a warm glance and said, "Now that you all want to stay with me, you have to help each other to build shelter for yourselves so that we can all live comfortably."

With these happy tidings, they all cleared the dishes and went to work.

From then on, they lived happily together, year after year.

Translated by CYRUS TAHBAZ

Illustrated by AMIR-ALI BAROOTIAN

Nepal

GYANU AND THE LAMB

by
ABHI SUBEDI

Gyanu was just a little boy, but he was very clever. He loved the animals on his father's farm. He knew that he was going to be their master after his father became old, so he took special care of the younger animals on the farm. Gyanu knew everything about each of the animals. He was familiar with their habits, their age and their choice of grass. He treated all the animals as his friends.

Gyanu loved to watch the floating clouds. He especially liked the white patches. He liked them because they looked like the fleece of a lamb. His father did not have any sheep on his farm. Gyanu wondered why the patches looked like fleece. Was it because heaven was full of many beautiful animals, as his brother said? His brother had told him that God in heaven had large flocks of animals. God especially liked lambs, so there were many lambs on his farm. Gyanu thought that perhaps these patches were the fleece of lambs. He would ask his father to also keep sheep on

his farm. How nice that would be!

That evening Gyanu went home a little late. He knew that his father would be worried about him. Gyanu was watching patches of clouds in the evening glow. He loved to see their changing colours, but he did not want his father to worry about him any longer, so finally Gyanu hurried home. His father hugged him and asked where he had been, and Gyanu told him all he had seen.

Gyanu did not go to bed at the usual time. He said that he was not tired, but his father looked at him with some concern and asked, "Gyanu my son, what is wrong with you tonight?"

Gyanu did not want to hide his feelings from his father. "Daddy, are the lambs of heaven like the ones we have here on earth? Their fleece looks similar, so the lambs must be similar, too. Can we bring the lambs of heaven to our farm?" Gyanu's father liked the idea, and said, "I suppose we can."

"Then will you bring sheep to our farm, Daddy?"

"I will bring some very beautiful sheep."

Gyanu's father brought four sheep to add to the number of animals on his farm. Gyanu was very pleased. In the course of time the sheep gave birth to two little lambs. They were such lovely little lambs that Gyanu never left them, except at night.

The little white lambs jumped around and bleated softly as they raced down the slope to meet their mother. Gyanu, sitting on a rock, looked up at the sky and then down the hill. He believed that tender, fleecy clouds were descending to his farm. The lambs moved like the clouds. They changed their shapes over the green

meadow as they moved. They had one extra quality, however—they were not silent. They bleated.

Gyanu admired his father for bringing the clouds down from the sky. He was very thankful to him, for he had kept his word. How he loved his father!

The lambs grew very quickly. To Gyanu they were even lovelier than before. He loved to watch them grow, for their habits changed slightly as they grew. They became more calm and always kept close to the flock, and bleated only occasionally. Gyanu was very attached to both of them.

One day he heard something unbelievable. A friend of his father talked about slaughtering one of the lambs. How horrible! How could his father agree to such an idea? He was confident that his daddy never would, so Gyanu did not even mention it to him.

One day Gyanu went with his mother to his maternal uncle's home for the wedding of his cousin, but all the time his thoughts were with his little lambs on the farm. Sometimes, he even had fears about them being slaughtered. Gyanu felt uneasy, and wanted to return home.

Upon his return, Gyanu's sister informed him that one of the lambs had been killed. His father's friend had come again and convinced him to kill the lamb. Gyanu was horrified. He ran behind the haystack and sobbed softly to himself. "Oh, Daddy, what have you done?"

After a while he returned to the house. His daddy was pleased to see him, and he seemed to feel no regrets over the lamb's slaughter. Gyanu's horrors were mounting. The sky was full of angry clouds. Half of

the fleecy clouds were gone.

Gyanu decided to save the remaining lamb from getting slaughtered. He felt that his father did not love him anymore, for he had not thought of him when he let the other lamb get slaughtered.

Gyanu left the house. It was evening, and darkness was falling fast over the haystack and the cowshed. Gyanu put the lamb on a lead, and walked away as fast as he could. The lamb knew why Gyanu was taking it away, and did not bleat, for he was willing to go to any corner of the world with Gyanu.

They soon crossed the stream where his father's old farmhouse stood. There was a big haystack in the field, and a small wood. Gyanu thought that this was the best place to hide. He could perhaps start a new farm here with his lamb. This property also belonged to his father, so nobody could object to his occupying the farm.

He chose the back of the haystack to spend the night. He put the lamb near him, made a little warm nest in the hay, and lay down. He could see soft fleecy clouds scattered far and wide in the moonlit sky. The moon disappeared behind them and emerged again. How lovely it all looked! His lamb was breathing softly and at times munching the hay. Gyanu felt at one with the earth and the sky. He wondered how people could bring heaven to the farm and then slaughter it without a second thought.

It was the third day that Gyanu and the lamb spent at the old farm. He felt very hungry. He saw the lamb standing in the field, and thought that perhaps the lamb wanted to tell him something. There were sweet

potato plants all over the field. Gyanu dug out some very good ones and ate them.

That evening, he thought of his father, and even felt like going back home, but the lamb looked horrified at the idea of returning. Gyanu abandoned the idea.

While he was making his small bed in the haystack as night fell, he saw his father standing over him, quiet and very sad. Gyanu loved his daddy. He wanted to go and hug him, but he did not do so. He had slaughtered his fleecy lamb, he had scattered his fleecy cloud. He had slaughtered something else, also, but he did not know what it was.

His father hugged him, lifted him up and kissed him. His face was wet with tears as he said softly, "I will never slaughter the lamb. I'll always keep heaven on our farm." He softly stroked the lamb, and then lifted Gyanu up onto his shoulders. The lamb followed him as they headed back to the farm under the fleecy clouds.

Translated by the author

Illustrated by TEK BIR MUKHIYA

Mongolia

THE ORPHANED WHITE CAMEL

Folktale

Once upon a time there lived a prince and a rich man. The rich man intended to marry into the prince's family, and so decided to present him with one hundred white camels. When he was about to give the hundred camels he noticed that there were only ninety-nine, so he gave the prince his own white she-camel and left her baby camel at home.

The baby camel wandered about howling for his mother, crying night and day. The rich man ordered many beautiful flowers to be set in a large yurt*, and he put the baby camel into it, but he howled and howled, night and day he cried until the yurt fell down. Then the shaggy little camel ran through passes and peaks, through steppes and deserts, crying in a thin voice for his mother, until the rich man's horse herdsman saw him. He grabbed his ten-fathom-long iron lasso with a loop made of tigerskin, mounted his light bay horse, and galloped off in pursuit of the baby camel.

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* yurt: a Mongolian dome-shaped house

The herdsman caught the baby camel, whipped him with all his might with the lasso, and shouted, "I'll lay your wretched skin under my dogs and cook your miserable meat for my horse-herd boy. That'll teach you!"

He brought the baby camel back and tied him to the neck of a huge black bull camel. The baby camel rushed back and forth on the leash and cried his heart out night and day.

"Why don't you quit howling all the time?" Asked the huge black camel. At this the baby camel told him everything about himself. The black camel felt sorry for the little camel and said, "Let me sleep tonight. Don't howl. Before dawn I'll take the rope between my back teeth and try to wear it out on a rock and let you go."

The baby camel spent the night quietly. That night, the bull camel gripped the rope in his big mouth, and gathering his strength he wore out the rope against a rock and set the baby camel free early in the morning.

The shaggy baby camel cried out in a thin voice and ran through passes and peaks, through steppes and deserts. Again the herdsman galloped after him. He had nearly overtaken the baby camel when his horse suddenly stopped and said, "I've seen many orphans in this world, but never such a miserable one as this baby camel."

With that, the horse died. The baby camel ran on and met a she-wolf with her two cubs.

"What kind of a beast are you that you have to yell like this? I will eat you."

The baby camel told them how he was separated from his mother, and said at last, "Well, then eat me. If you eat me from the front, here is my long and beautiful neck. If you eat me from the bottom, here are my sweet feet. If you eat me from the top, here are my little round humps. If you eat me from the side, here are my thin ribs. If you eat me from the back, here are my two fine ankles."

Then said the wolf, "Many orphans I've seen before, but I've never met such an orphan as you." The hungry wolf ate one of her own cubs and didn't even

touch the baby camel.

The shaggy baby camel ran farther through passes and peaks, through steppes and deserts. Suddenly a dense black forest appeared in his way, one which he could neither go through, nor pass around. The baby camel cried louder than ever and rushed back and forth until he saw a clearing. He ran through the clearing and out of the woods, on and on until he came to a boiling sea which he could neither swim across nor pass around.

The baby camel howled again, rushing back and forth on the shore, when suddenly a giant turtle and size of a very large yurt appeared and said angrily,

"What a wretched beast you are! Why don't you leave hardworking people alone?"

The baby camel told him what he had been through. The giant turtle felt sorry for the baby camel, and carried him across the sea.

The shaggy baby camel cried in a thin voice and again ran through passes and peaks, through steppes and deserts, and at last he heard his mother's voice from afar. The mother camel also heard the voice of her baby and called to him. The rich man then put her in an iron house surrounded by three thousand soldiers, but she broke through the wall of the iron house, slaughtered the army of three thousand men, and ran to her child.

The baby camel followed the golden trail of his mother and drank her delicious milk. Soon they met a good herdsman, and lived happily ever after.

Illustrated by BADMAARAGIIN TSOG

Australia

THE RAINBOW SERPENT

by
DICK ROUGHSEY

Far off in Dreamtime there were only people, no animals or birds, no trees or bushes, no hills or mountains. The country was all flat.

Goorialla, the great Rainbow Serpent, stirred and set off to look for his own tribe. He travelled across Australia from south to north.

He reached Cape York, where he stopped and made a big red mountain called Narabullgan. He listened on the wind and heard only voices speaking strange languages. "This is not my country, the people here speak a different tongue. I must look farther for my own people."

Goorialla left Narabullgan and his huge body made a deep gorge where he came down. He travelled north, stopping every evening to listen on the wind for his own people. He travelled for many days, and his tracks made the valleys of creeks and rivers as he journeyed north.

Travelling north from Narabullgan, Goorialla made

two more mountains. One of them, Naradunga, was long and made of granite; the other, which had sharp peaks and five caves, was called Gormungan.

His next resting place was at Fairview, where he made a lily lagoon called Minalinka. Goorialla turned his great body round and round, but the ground was too hard to make it deep.

One day he heard singing on the wind. He heard, 'Ahrrr, AHRRR, AHRRR'. "Those are my people singing," said Goorialla. "They are holding a big bora*." He travelled north, and the singing became louder and louder.

At the meeting place of the two rivers Goorialla

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* bora: aboriginal word for meeting / ceremonial place

found his own people. They were dancing and singing. He crawled up quietly and lay in hiding to watch them. He watched for a long time, then he came out and was welcomed by his people.

He told them, "You men are not dancing properly and you are not dressed properly. Watch me and I will show you the correct way." Goorialla showed the men how to fit a lump of beeswax on the back of their heads and use feathers to make a rayed headdress.

He dressed them with pandanus* armbands and placed white bones through their noses. Then he taught them to dance, and they copied him until they were tired.

A big storm was gathering, so all the people built humpies* for shelter.

Two young men, the Bil-bil brothers, came running in looking for shelter, but no one had room.

They asked their grandmother, the Star Woman, but she said, "I have too many dogs, so I can't help you boys."

The Bil-bil boys went to Goorialla and found him snoring in his humpy. When the boys called out he yawned and said, "I have no room for you." The rain came heavier and the boys ran all about the camp looking for shelter, but no one would help them.

The boys went back to Goorialla and called out that the rain was heavy. Goorialla said, "All right, you wait, I will make my humpy bigger." He opened his

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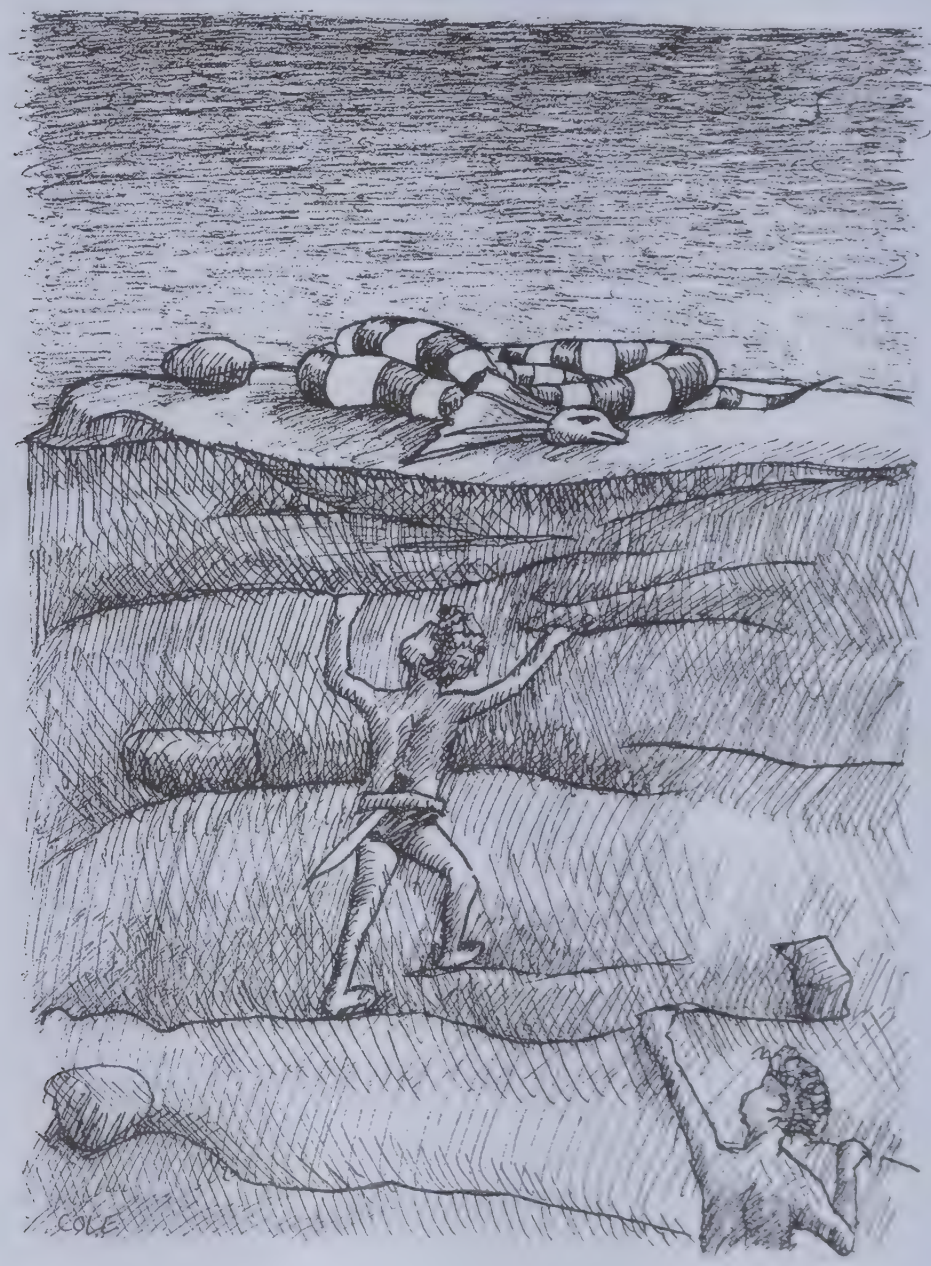
* pandanus: a type of palm tree native to Australia

* humpies: temporary shelters made from leaves and tree branches

mouth wide, right up to the roof, and said, "All right, you can come in now."

The Bil-bil brothers ran into Goorialla's mouth and he swallowed them. Then he began worrying about what his people would do when they found the boys were missing. He decided to travel north to Bora-bunaru, the only great natural mountain in the land.

Next morning the people asked each other who had given shelter to the Bil-bil boys. They found the



boys were gone and saw the tracks of Goorialla, and knew he had swallowed them. The men took spears and followed after Goorialla.

Goorialla travelled towards distant Bora-bunaru, the mighty mountain which towered far up into the sky. When he reached the cliffs around its base Goorialla crawled up to them. He coiled up for a sleep with the Bil-bil boys inside him.

The people followed Goorialla to the steep base of Bora-bunaru. The men tried to climb the cliffs—Emu, Turkey, Brolga, Tortoise, Possum, Barramundi—they all tried, but kept falling down again.

Two Wangoo, or Tree Goanna brothers, came along. Gooranji, the emu, said to them, "We cannot climb this steep mountain." The Wangoo brothers said, "We will climb up to rescue the Bil-bil boys." They each made a knife from quartz and began to climb the mountain.

The Wangoo brothers climbed for days and nights, and on reaching the top found Goorialla fast asleep and snoring.

They crept up to him, and the older brother said, "We will cut him open. You start down there and I will start here."

They cut until they reached the Bil-bil boys, who had changed into beautiful parrots with all the colours of the Rainbow Serpent. The Wangoo said, "You can come out; you are now Rainbow Lorikeets with wings, and can fly away."

The Bil-bil birds flew away, and the Wangoo brothers ran down the mountain.

Goorialla snored on until a cold wind blew through his empty stomach and woke him. He said, "Something

is wrong with me." He looked about and saw where he had been cut and his dinner stolen.

Goorialla became angry and worked himself into a great rage. He began to thrash about in fury, his long red tongue flashing like lightning, and the great mountain shook and thundered as Goorialla tore it apart in his anger. He hurled parts of the mountain all over the country, to form the hills and mountains of today.

All the people were terrified of the thunder on the mountain as Goorialla knocked it to pieces. Some of them were killed by flying stones. Others ran away to hide, turning themselves into all kinds of animals, birds, insects and plant life that live in the country today.

That is how it all happened back in the Dreamtime. When Goorialla's anger was spent there was only a small hill remaining of the great mountain Bora-bunaru. He went down and disappeared into the sea, where he remains to this day.

Now the remaining people have to look after all the animals, all the living things which were men and women in the beginning but who were too afraid of old Goorialla to remain as people. The shooting star racing across the sky at night is the eye of Goorialla—watching everybody.

Illustrated by BEN COLE

Vietnam

THE PEASANT AND THE TIGER

Folktale

Very long, long ago, there lived a big tiger who was King of the Wild Animals. With black fur, eyes like flames and teeth as sharp as knives, this tiger was the terror of the jungle, killing and eating many other animals.

One day, after having a whole deer for breakfast, Tiger took a walk. He noticed with satisfaction how animals fled on seeing him. Then he saw something that he could not understand. In a field near the foot of a mountain, a buffalo was quietly and steadily pulling a plough, followed by a young peasant who kept shouting and beating the buffalo with a bamboo rod.

Tiger was puzzled, as nobody would ever treat him that way in his kingdom. He waited and waited until the peasant and the buffalo stopped for a rest. He then came near the buffalo and asked, "Tell me, my friend! How come you let the little man beat and shout at you like that? I can see that you are big and strong. With your knife-sharp pointed horns, you can easily gore that man to death any time. I simply can't understand

why you are so submissive."

The buffalo looked up at Tiger and said sadly, "He is little, yes, but don't you know that he has his wisdom?"

"Wisdom, you said?" The Tiger asked in surprise. "What do you mean by wisdom?"

The buffalo was irritated, for he himself did not know what wisdom was. He did not want to admit it to the Tiger, so he said, "You'd better go and ask the man yourself!"

Tiger walked up to the man, who was smoking a bamboo pipe, and said, "The buffalo told me that you have wisdom. Is it true?"

"Yes, it is true," said the man. Then Tiger asked, "What is it like? Would you kindly let me have a look at it?"

"I wish I could show it to you, but I left it at home this morning for fear of losing it in the field."

"Will you go back and get it? I really want to see what it is like."

"Sure, I will," said the man and walked a few steps. Then he suddenly stopped and came back. "I can't leave now," he said. "I am afraid that you will kill my buffalo while I am away."

"I swear I won't," said Tiger. "I am still full after having a deer for breakfast, so you need not be worried."

The man thought for a moment, and then said, "Okay, I will go if you let me tie you up at that tree. Then I won't be worried about you eating my buffalo."

Eager to have a look at the so-called wisdom, Tiger agreed. The man quickly tied him up at the tree.

He then gathered dead leaves and firewood around the Tiger and set fire to them, saying, "Here is my wisdom."

The flames grew high and hot, but Tiger couldn't move. He looked so pained and helpless in the fire that the buffalo laughed and laughed until he tumbled upon a rock and broke his upper teeth.

Only after the ropes around him were burnt off could Tiger get free. He roared in pain and fled into the jungle.

Since that time, members of the tiger family are born with black and brown fur as a result of the burns inflicted by the peasant, and members of the buffalo family are born with their upper teeth missing.

Translated by NGUYEN THANH CHAU

Illustrated by NGUYEN XUAN THANG

Republic of Korea

WHY DOES HYLA CROAK ON EVERY RAINY DAY?

by
KIM YOUNG-JU

Once, there was a boy hyla* who lived with his mother hyla. The young hyla used to disobey his mother, doing everything just as he pleased.

For one thing, if his mother said to him, "My boy, you go outside and play because I'm going to clean the house today," he would not go out, but would run here and there in the house. If she told him to go to the mountain, he would go to the river. If he was told to come here, then he would go there.

Mother Hyla was very sad. "Why does he always go against me? How can I cure him of his bad habit?" She sighed.

Of course, Son Hyla knew well that his mother was unhappy because of him, but far from being sorry for his acts, he became more and more naughty. His only thought was how to do the reverse of what he was told

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* hyla: a tree-toad

to do. At last he even came to reverse the order of his croak. While every other hyla croaked, "C-r-o-a-k! C-r-o-a-k! C-r-o-a-k," this stubborn hyla would croak, "K-a-o-r-c! K-a-o-r-c! K-a-o-r-c!"

Mother Hyla was very anxious about her son's bad conduct.

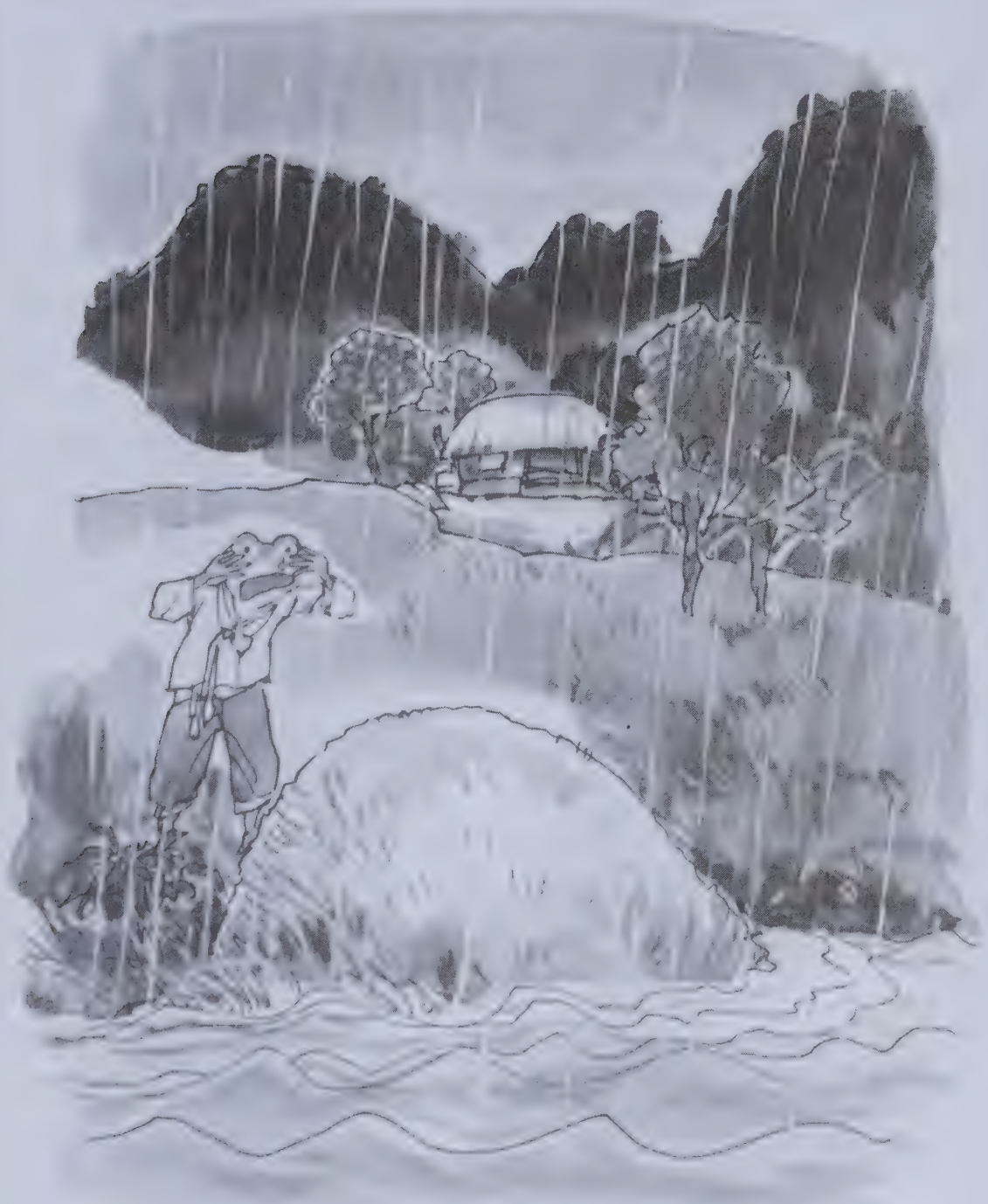
"Oh, my darling, I beg of you to be a good boy. When on earth will you come to be wise?" She pleaded. "Now I might fall ill."

Yet, Son Hyla kept on doing the opposite, as always.

Days and months went by with no improvement in the son's conduct, and his mother soon became sick with great anxiety. Son Hyla thought nothing of her illness at first but she became worse day by day. Before long she was at the point of death.

Mother Hyla called her son to her bedside. "My boy, I don't think I can go on living. When I die, bury me at the riverside, not on the mountain." She did not really mean what she said. She was merely afraid that he would bury her at the riverside if she told him to bury her on the mountain.

On saying this, she died. Only after her death did



her son realise that he had done his mother a great wrong. He cried bitterly.

"Oh, Mommy! I did wrong. It's my fault that you died. Wake up! Mommy, wake up! I'll be a good boy!" He bitterly repented of his folly, but it was too late.

With tears running down his face, Son Hyla made up his mind not to act contrary from now on. He thought, "Until now I have never obeyed Mommy, and I have made her heart break. I will be sure to follow Mommy's last request."

He buried his mother at the riverside. After that, on every rainy day Son Hyla felt uneasy about his mother's tomb. He was afraid that his mother's grave might be washed down into the river, so he croaked and croaked until his throat became hoarse.

"C-r-o-a-k! C-r-o-a-k! C-r-o-a-k!"

That is why the hyla croaks on every rainy day.

Translated and illustrated by the author

Laos

THE UNGRATEFUL DOG

by
SAMRIT BOUASISAVATH

Once upon a time there was a lazy dog who belonged to a hunter. One day the hunter led him and his other dogs into the forest to hunt. The lazy dog was not able to keep up with the others because he was so slow, so he soon was left behind and got completely lost. He barked and barked again, but no barking answered him. When the sun set and it grew dark, he grew very afraid. He wandered here and there through the forest, hungry and thirsty.

Eventually, he happened upon a hermit's hut. He drank water from the pot used for washing the hermit's feet, and then crawled under the hut and soon fell fast asleep.

When the hermit came back from the forest he pitied the dog and fed him. Because the hermit fed him, the dog stayed. He ate and slept, slept and ate, and was so happy there that he never spared a thought for his old master.

After a while the hermit thought, "This dog has

come here to escape from some kind of suffering, but it is not good for me, a hermit, to look after him. People may think I keep a dog for hunting. What shall I do?"

After much thought, the hermit decided on a plan. Using his magic powers, he changed the dog into a beautiful golden deer. The deer grazed near the hermit's hut, and was very proud of himself because he could run for miles, and run like the wind.

One day while he was grazing near the hermit's hut, a huge tiger chanced to pass that way. When the deer saw him he raced, terrified, over to the hermit, and the hermit was once again filled with pity for the

animal. He thought, "My golden deer is very vulnerable, so I will use my magic powers to change him into a tiger. Then he will always be able to defend himself." So the deer became a tiger, and was even more pleased than before, because now he was able to seek his food far from the hermit's hut, and he was very proud of his great strength.

Time passed, and then one day he was attacked by a lion. He escaped, and fled to the hermit's hut, and once again the hermit took pity on him.

He said to himself, "To be a tiger is not enough, so I will change him into a lion, the most powerful of all the animals of the forest." The tiger was changed into a lion, and wandered around the forest fearing nothing.

One day he met a very beautiful lioness, and fell in love with her. He talked to her very politely, and he was so charming that she fell in love with him, too. When he asked her to marry him, though, she refused.

"I cannot just go ahead and marry you," she said. "I have parents, and I am a good daughter to them. I must have their permission before I make any big decision in my life. If you really love me, then you must come with me to meet them and talk to them about marrying me. That is the proper thing to do."

He was very much in love with her, so he agreed, and they went to visit her parents. He explained to them that he loved their daughter and wanted to marry her.

"You cannot marry our daughter now, because we do not know you. Who are you? Who are your parents? What is your family like? We shall visit your friend the hermit and get the details from him. If everything

is in order, we won't stand in your way. You can marry our daughter.

When the lion heard this, he became very worried. "The hermit is a good man, and cannot tell a lie. When her parents go to him he will tell them the truth, that I began life as a dog. My terrible secret will be revealed, and I'm certain her parents will not let me marry her." An evil thought came into his head. "If I kill the hermit first, he will not be able to tell them my secret."

Off he ran to the hermit's hut. The hermit, seeing the lion rearing up on his back legs, and pointing his tail up in the air, knew what the lion was about to do. He said to himself, "This lion is treacherous and ungrateful. I have looked after him and have helped him

to have a happy life. I have changed him from a dog to a deer, a deer to a tiger, and from a tiger to a lion, the most powerful of all the animals. I have done all this for him, and still he wants to kill me."

Turning to the lion, he said, "I can have pity on you no longer. You are a good-for-nothing creature. May you become again the dog you were at the beginning." Using his magic powers again, he transformed the lion into the dog once more. The dog was so ashamed of what he had done that he could not look the hermit in the face, and he ran away into the forest, not knowing where he was going.

A pack of wolves saw him and ran after him. They attacked him and tore him to pieces. That was the end of the ungrateful dog.

Translated by the author

Illustrated by KONGPHAT LUANGRATH

Myanmar

MISS PARROT SHWE GAE

by
MYA MYA THAN

Once upon a time, a farmer kept a parrot called Shwe Gae in a cage.

All the members of the farmer's family and the children in the village loved the parrot because she could talk like a human being.

As she was loved by all, it began to go to her head. She thought she knew everything. To make matters worse, she looked down on others and scolded them.

The parrot said cruelly to the old watchdog, "How very disgraceful you are, Mr. Dog! You look patchy patchy with your messy hair. You are very ugly, so please stay away from me."

To Mrs. Hen's family she scolded, "As soon as dawn comes, you begin to cluck. How very noisy you are! And your children are too playful. Do keep them under control. You yourself look restless."

Then, looking at a bee, she mocked, "You are very tiny, Mr. Bee, but you're always buzzing about. What are you so busy with?"

At dusk, when Mr. Ox came from the farm, he used to calmly graze and chew the cud. When Shwe Gae saw Mr. Ox, she scolded, "You always move about the village from dawn to dusk. Now you've come here to take it easy, chewing the cud."

Knowing about her very well, Mr. Dog, Mrs. Hen, Mr. Bee and Mr. Ox never talked back to her. They ignored her, for they knew that she was hostile and it would be useless to debate with her.

One day, the farmer's daughter fed the parrot and forgot to close the cage door.

Shwe Gae tottered slowly out of her cage, for she had never been to the outside world. She staggered from the cage to the front part of the house, and then out into the garden.

The parrot saw Mr. Bee carrying nectar from the flowers to the beehive. She asked, "Why are you sucking the nectar and what are you going to do with it, Mr. Bee?"

"If you want to know, follow me," said Mr. Bee and led the way. Arriving at a banyan tree, Mr. Bee pointed at the beehive in the tree and said, "That beehive was built by our labour. I collected the nectar in the beehive. Because I collect it bit by bit every day, we've come to possess such a big honeycomb. Now we don't worry about having enough food."

"Oh! I see. That's why he's always busy," thought the parrot.

Then she met Mrs. Hen near the banyan tree. Six little chicks were looking for food with her. Suddenly, Mrs. Hen clucked, and the chicks who were some distance away ran and hid under her wings.

Shwe Gae did not know what to do, so Mrs. Hen

shouted, "Hey, Shwe Gae! Take shelter in that bush!"

Shwe Gae rushed under the bush nearby. Peering out through the branches, she saw a hawk swoop down to the ground.

The hawk had come to snatch away the chicks, but Mrs. Hen kept her chicks huddled under her wings and flashed her beak angrily at the hawk. The hawk dared not go near Mrs. Hen, and it soon gave up and flew away.

Shwe Gae repented for accusing Mrs. Hen of being restless. She realized that Mrs. Hen was always on the alert for her enemy.

The parrot proceeded to the farm, where she saw Mr. Ox working.

"He toils all day. That's why he takes a rest and chews the cud in the evening," remarked the parrot.

Shwe Gae decided to go back home. When she was

nearly home, she came face-to-face with a wild cat. The cat sprang at the parrot, but she hopped aside and narrowly escaped its claws..Then, as it crouched to attack again, Mr. Dog ran growling up to the cat, and it fled.

Shwe Gae was trembling with fright. "Thanks a lot for your help, Mr. Dog. You came just in time otherwise, I would have had it."

She told her experiences to Mr. Dog, and begged that she be forgiven for looking down upon others.

Mr. Dog smiled and said, "You don't know about the world very well because you are fed and accommodated. Now, Shwe Gae... Everyone has to take responsibility for his own or her living. All creatures have to struggle and be always vigilant against their enemies. In the future, don't think only of yourself, living in your small space. Try to observe the outside world. Put yourself in the other's place and learn the truth. In this way, you are bound to become mature and wise."

"Now I understand, Mr. Dog," said Miss Parrot, and walked back into her little cage. Being very hungry, she ate guava to her fill, and then settled down to rest.

Translated by MAUNG HLAING

Illustrated by KYAW TUN

New Zealand

THE CAKE THAT GREW

by
RAE NICHOLLS

Mere could always find something to do at Granny's place. One day, she was digging in the garden with an old shell.

"Hello!" Wagged the dog. "What are you doing?"

"I'm making a cake," said Mere, "and I need a big hole."

The dog started digging, too. Together, they dug a hole in the garden.

"That's a very good hole," said Mere.

The dog saw another dog next door, and ran off to play.

"Hello!" Yawned the cat. "What are you doing?"

"I'm making a cake," said Mere, "and I need some flour."

The cat gave the pile of dirt a poke with its paw."

"This is very good flour," said Mere.

The cat sharpened its claws on a log and settled down to watch Mere work.

"Hello!" Cawed the rooster. "What are you doing?"

"I'm making a cake," said Mere, "and I need some sugar."

The rooster picked up a piece of shell in its beak, dropped it, and picked up another.

"That's very good sugar," said Mere.

The rooster puffed up its chest and strutted away to crow to the hens.

"Hello!" Said Granny. "What are you doing?"

"I'm making a cake," said Mere, "and I need some raisins."

Granny picked one of last year's bean pods and opened it up. Inside the long, brown pod were five shiny fat beans.

"Will these do?" Asked Granny.

Mere looked at the beans in her hand and rattled them together.

"They're very good raisins," she said. She put them down beside her. "All I need now is some milk."

"Pick up the tin," said Granny, "and I'll turn on the tap for you."

"Whoosh!" The water went right up to the rim of

the golden syrup tin. As Mere carried it back to the garden, it dripped a trail behind her.

The cat looked up in alarm.

"It's all right," said Mere, "I won't wet you."

She poured some water into the hole, and the water quickly went out at the bottom.

"This hole has a hole in it," she thought to herself.

Mere scooped up some mud from the bottom of the hole. She tossed it and rolled it in her flour and sugar. She kneaded it and punched it—just like Granny did, making bread. It was too dry, so she poured in more water.

Soon it had turned into lovely black porridge.

She squeezed it in her hands and watched it come out between her fingers.

"Now it's just right," she said. "All I need is something to bake it in."

"Will this do?" Asked Granny, coming out of the house with a shoe box.

"That's a very good cake tin," said Mere, lifting the mixture into the shoe box and patting it down.

Then she remembered the raisins.

The beans were lying on the ground where she had dropped them. She picked them up and poked them—one, two, three, four, five—into the cake.

"And now for the icing," said Mere.

She picked up some shells from the path and sprinkled them over the top.

Mere was pleased with it. So was Granny.

Mere left her cake in a sunny corner of the garden and then forgot about it.

One day she was helping Granny pick puha in the garden when she nearly fell over the shoe box.

Something had happened to her cake! Some green things were sticking up through the icing.

"Granny!" She called. "My cake's got candles!"

"How many?" Asked Granny.

"One, two, three, four," Mere counted, "and here's another just coming up. Five candles!"

Granny found five long sticks and poked them into the ground around Mere's cake.

Then she brought some string and tied the sticks together at the top, like a tent.

"Now," she said, "your cake will have something to grow on."

Every day, Mere watched those candles grow. Leaves unfolded from them like green umbrellas. Then came curly tendrils, that clung to the sticks.

Soon they were as high as the cat's whiskers.

In a few more days they were as high as the rooster's tail.

Then they were as high as the dog's nose.

There were some rainy days, and Mere had to

stay inside.

When she looked at her cake again, the five green candles were as high as her chin. Five red flowers winked at her from the top of the leaves.

By Christmas, the candles were as tall as Granny. Then there were beans to pick for dinner, long and shiny ones, as good as any beans that ever grew, and quite as good as Granny's.

Illustrated by DICK FRIZZELL

China

LITTLE TORTOISE LOOKING FOR A JOB

by
WU YUGUI

The post office was going to hire some postmen. Little Tortoise said to himself, "It would be an interesting job to deliver letters. I should go and sign up."

So Little Tortoise went to the post office, and Little Kangaroo happened to be there to write down his name, too. Post Office Director Ostrich gave them each a green cap. Little Tortoise had a small head, so his cap was small too, only as big as half an apple; but he looked handsome with the cap on.

Early the next morning, Little Tortoise and Little Kangaroo set out to deliver letters.

Little Kangaroo hopped and jumped, and gave out one hundred letters that day. Little Tortoise crept and crawled, and delivered only one letter.

Toward evening, both of them came back to the post office. The bag on Little Kangaroo's belly was empty, but the bag on Little Tortoise's back was still full.

"I'm sorry," said Director Ostrich, "We will hire only Little Kangaroo. Little Tortoise, you'd better go somewhere else to find a job."

"I will certainly find a job!" Little Tortoise gave the small green cap back to Director Ostrich.

As Little Tortoise walked down the road, he met Little Monkey. Little Monkey told him that the fire brigade was recruiting some new members, and he was going to try his luck. "Well," said Little Tortoise, "I wouldn't mind being a fireman." And so he went with Little Monkey.

Seeing that they were there for jobs, the fire brigade Leader Bear offered them each a little red pail. Little Tortoise was so small that his pail was only as large as a cup, but he looked like a real fireman with the pail in his hand.

Suddenly, the fire alarm sounded. The crow's nest in the yard was on fire. Leader Bear ordered Little Tortoise and Little Monkey to climb up the tree and put out the fire immediately.

The more Little Tortoise tried to climb the tree, the more slippery it seemed to be under his feet. He turned

around the tree again and again, but never got off the ground. Little Monkey climbed up the tree easily, and put out the fire in no time.

"That's all for the exam," said Leader Bear. "I'm sorry, but only Little Monkey can work here. I'm afraid you'll have to go somewhere else, Little Tortoise."

"I certainly will get a job." Little Tortoise gave the red pail back to Leader Bear.

From that day on, nobody knew where Little Tortoise had gone.

One day, a circus came to town, and Director Ostrich, Little Kangaroo, Leader Bear and Little Monkey all went to the performance.

When the huge purple curtain was drawn aside, there appeared on the stage an elephant, with a tiger standing on its back. On the tiger there rode a chimpanzee, and a little fox was on the head of the chimpanzee... Ahhh! How wonderful! The audience was truly amazed.

All of a sudden, sharp-sighted Little Monkey shouted, "Hey! Look there! Isn't that Little Tortoise?"

Everybody looked to find that, yes, it was Little Tortoise who was bearing the elephant on his back, right under everyone else. He had become an acrobat!

Little Tortoise had eventually found a job. Director Ostrich, Leader Bear, Little Monkey, and Little Kangaroo all felt happy. They clapped hard and shouted, "Little Tortoise, you're great!"

Illustrated by LIXIN

Laos

COW STARS

by
SAMRIT BOUASISAVATH

Long, long ago, so long ago that nobody knows exactly when it was, all animals could speak like men. At that time there was a cow and her calf, a daughter, who lived in a forest near a beautiful lake. The cow loved her calf as she loved her own eyes, and the calf loved her mother as she loved her own heart. They stayed in the forest safe and happy for a long time, until one day something terrible happened to them.

One evening, the cow left her calf at home while she went to eat grass near the lake. Suddenly, a huge tiger appeared and crouched to attack her. The cow was very frightened, and didn't know what to do. She thought of her calf, and was very worried, but she tried to be calm. "Oh, King of Tigers! I beg you to pardon me! Do not be in a hurry to kill me now. I have a calf at home, waiting to drink my milk. Please allow me to go back home and give her the milk. Early tomorrow morning I will come back here so that you can eat me."

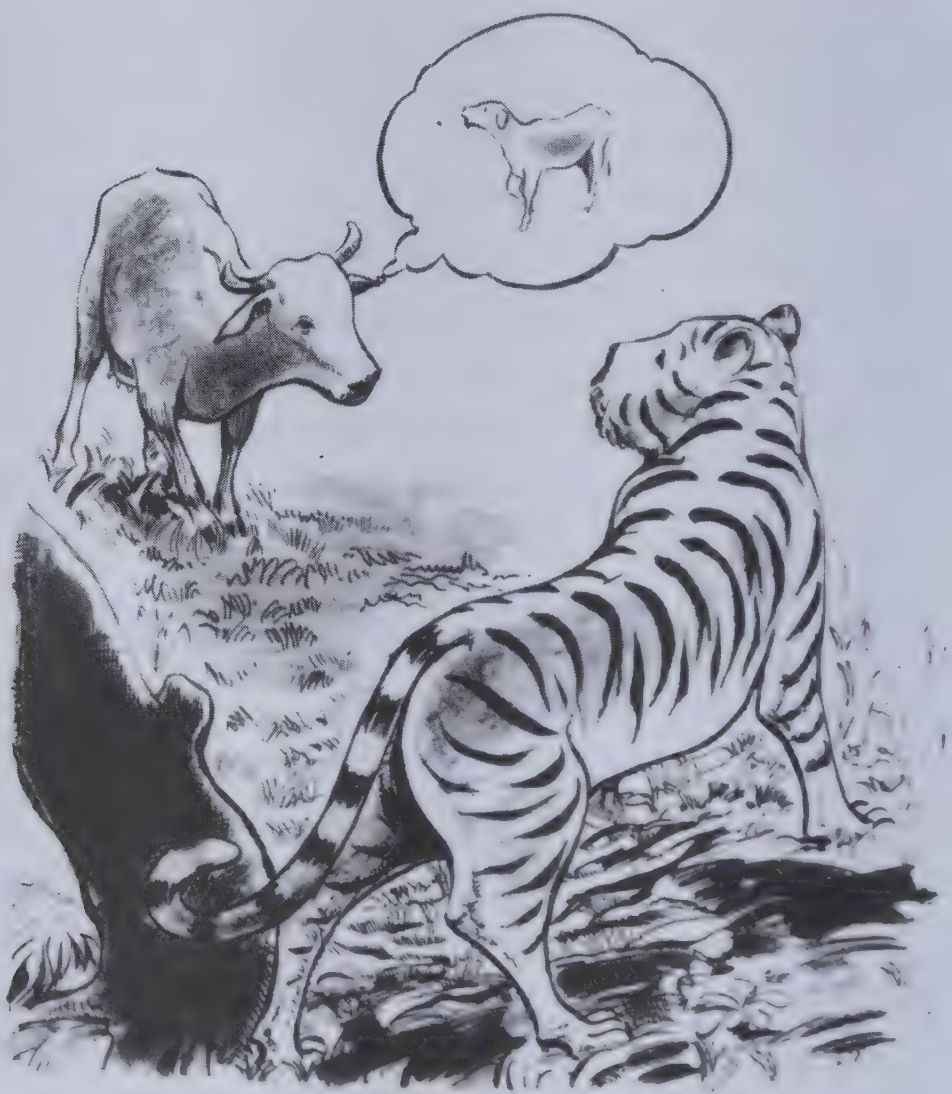
The tiger looked at the cow, afraid and pleading

with him like that, and took pity on her. "Have you got a calf?" He said. "If you are speaking the truth and will come here again so that I can eat you, I agree to let you go home so that you can give her the milk. But do not forget to come back tomorrow morning! I will be waiting here for you, and if you do not come, I shall go and eat both of you! Do you understand? Do not forget!"

"Certainly sir, I will not forget," replied the cow fearfully. "Letting me go to my calf is kind and merciful."

"Go quickly then, and do not forget to come back to me here tomorrow morning," the tiger answered.

At this the cow was very glad, and thanked him profusely. She returned home, crying, "Come, my child!



Be quick and drink your milk now. From tomorrow morning you will not see me again, and you shall have no more milk to drink."

The calf was surprised, and then said. "Why do you say that?" She asked. "I have never heard you speak like this before!"

Her mother wept. "Oh, my child!" She replied, the tears streaming from her eyes. "This evening I was very unlucky. When I was looking for grass to eat, I met a big tiger. He was going to attack and eat me, but I asked him to let me come back to you and give you milk. Tomorrow morning I must return to be his victim. Come on, my child! Be quick and drink your milk. From tomorrow you will have neither me nor my milk. You will have to live here alone in the forest, with all kinds of enemies. Be careful, protect yourself, and try to escape from them! Look at me now, because this is the last time you will ever see me!"

The calf looked very sad. "No, no, my mother!" She responded. "You must not die! You have me for your daughter! A mother's task is her daughter's also. Therefore I will go to die in your place. Be calm and do not worry, I will gladly give up my life for you. It is my duty to go and let the tiger eat me. May you have a long and happy life, my mother."

When the cow heard her calf's words she was heartbroken, pitying her daughter, but at the same time very proud of her.

"No, not at all, my child! I cannot let you die. You are still too young, with a long bright future ahead of you. You cannot go to be the victim of the tiger for me, because without you my life has no meaning. It is bet-

ter for me to die, and may you have better luck in the future. We cannot know the future," she added, "but we have to be hopeful about it."

While they were talking, the sun began to rise. It was the early morning of a new day. The kind little calf suddenly left her mother, and hurried to meet the tiger. Her mother ran after her.

The calf arrived to meet the tiger before the cow, crying out, "King of Tigers! Do not eat my mother, come and eat me instead! My meat will be tender and delicious. Help me to do this good thing for my mother!"

The cow ran up crying at the same time, "Master! Do not eat my child! She is young, and still very small. She will not fill your stomach. Come and eat me according to our agreement and you will have much more meat, as well as helping to do my duty as I wish."

The tiger was astonished at these words. "Why do they not fear to die?" He asked himself. "Both of them ask me to eat them. Animals are usually afraid of death. This is real love between a mother and her daughter, who are so close to each other that each would even give up her life for the other. I cannot destroy this love for my stomach! I will grant them their lives because of their goodness."

Then he spoke. "Oh my dear victims! I am the King of the Tigers. I could eat one of you, or both of you, but I have now decided that I cannot eat either of you, because your goodness has touched me. You would sacrifice your lives for each other. I am very pleased with you, so I will give you your lives. Go home and be happy forever."

When the tiger had finished speaking, he leapt into the forest and disappeared before the cow and her calf, now very happy, could thank him. Joyfully they made their way home, and lived together happily for many years.

When finally they left this world, they became two stars in heaven called the 'Cow Stars', which can be seen in the night sky to this day.

Translated by the author

Illustrated by KONGPHAT LUANGRATH

Japan

TOPSY-TURVY RABBIT

by
REIKO NAKAGAWA

One morning Kenta Rabbit opened his eyes, pushed his head under his blanket, and crawled down to come out head-first from the foot end of his little bed. Then he hopped into the kitchen.

"Good evening, Mother."

Mother Rabbit's eyes got big and round.

"My goodness, Kenta! You must still be half asleep. It's morning, and in the morning we say 'Good morning,' don't we?"

"Oh, but I have become a topsy-turvy, upside-down rabbit," explained Kenta Rabbit. He took off his pyjamas, then pulled his trousers on over his head, and put his legs into the sleaves of his shirt.

"See! The topsy-turvy rabbit!" Kenta Rabbit bounced up and down. "Mother, my belly is so full. What's for supper? Oh, I hope it's not apples. You know how I hate apples..."

He walked once around the table, then hopped up onto his chair, and once more—boing!—up onto the

table, where he sat on his soft, round tail.

Mother Rabbit's eyes were again big and round.

"Oh dear, such poor manners! That is the table, and you know that it is where we put our plates."

"But, I am now the topsy-turvy rabbit. I will put my plate on the chair."

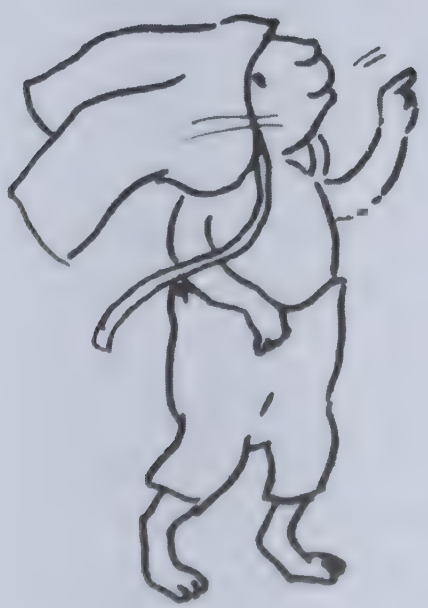
"Well, well," said Mother Rabbit, "I have just the right thing." She reached down and pulled a giant carrot from the vegetable basket.

"Alright, Mr. Carrot, enjoy your meal of topsy-turvy Kenta Rabbit," and with that she set the carrot down on the chair in front of Kenta. "Mr. Carrot, would you like to have salt on your Kenta Rabbit, or vinegar, or maybe mayonnaise?"

There in front of Kenta sat a carrot man with a shaggy head of green hair and an orange face, two eyes, a nose and mouth, and even a beard!

Now it was Kenta's eyes that got big and round.

"Hey, you're sitting in my chair!" Kenta grabbed the carrot by its green top and threw it down on the



floor. Then he hopped down to sit in his old familiar chair.

Father Rabbit came into the kitchen.

"Good morning, Son."

"Good evening, Father," answered Kenta Rabbit.

"Oh, what is this? Kenta seems to be only half awake. I say, aren't your shirt and trousers upside-down and out of place? You had better go and wash your face with cold water."

"Father, you're impossible. I am not still half asleep." Kenta thumped himself on the chest. "I am now a topsy-turvy rabbit."

Kenta Rabbit picked up his glass of vegetable juice and said, "I hate this awful juice." Then he drank it down in one joyful gulp.

"Ho-hum, how unfortunate. There's nothing here that I like to eat," said Kenta Rabbit. Then he quickly ate up every bit of the apple and cabbage on his plate. "My, how bad that tasted!" Kenta wiped his mouth with his napkin.

"Oh, I'm so hungry," he said, rubbing his belly tenderly, then jumped down from his chair and said, "It's time to eat."

Boing-boing! Kenta hopped over to the window and shouted out, "Look it's raining!"

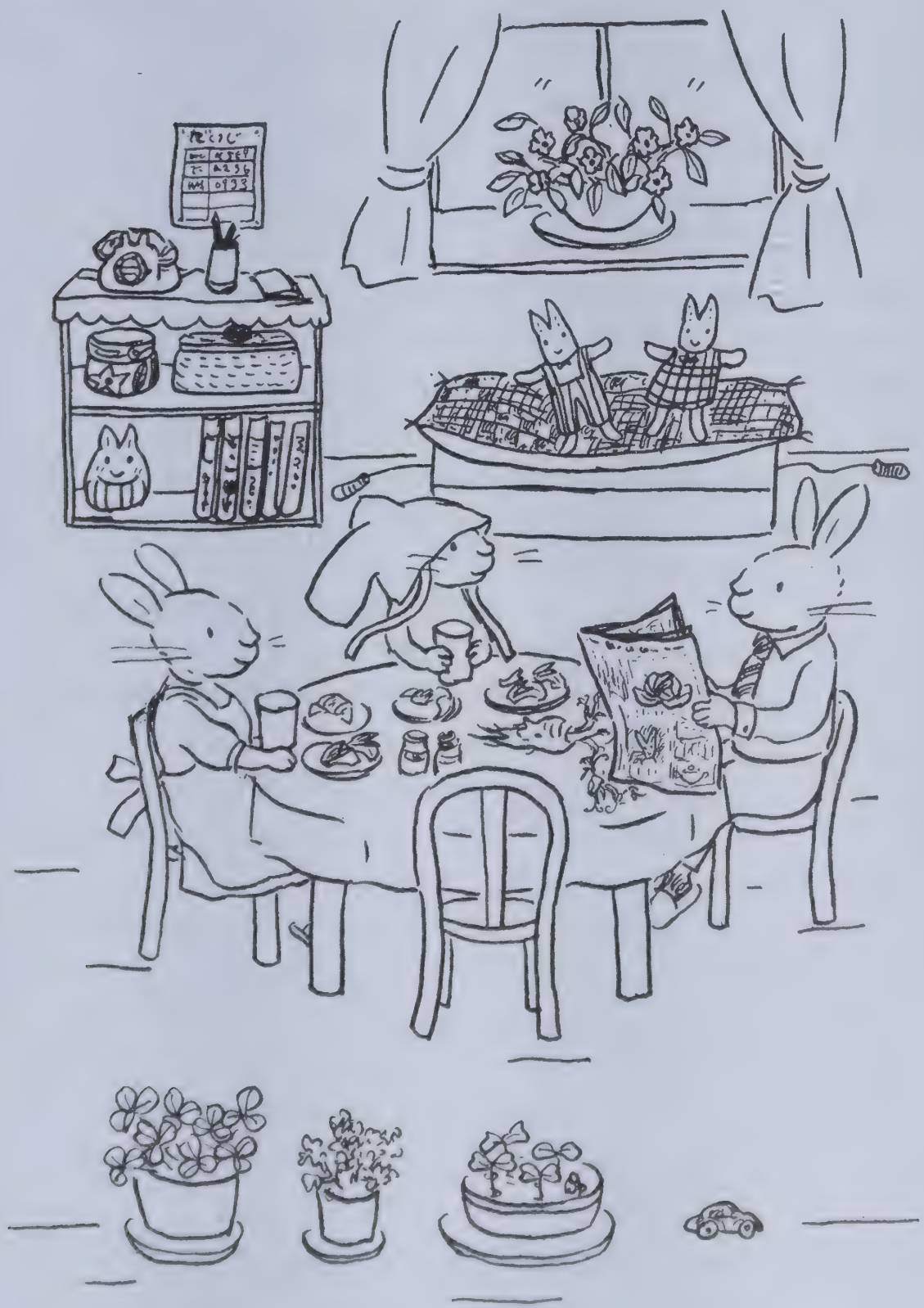
"Rain, rain, oh dear! I must go and bring in the laundry," said Mother Rabbit, and out into the yard she hopped.

In no time at all, she came back inside with a laundry basket full of clothing. "Oh, but to you, silly Kenta, this must be such fine weather."

Kenta puffed out his chest proudly. "Yes, because

I am now the topsy-turvy rabbit, you know."

"Well, of course," said Father Rabbit. "That looks like such fun. Why don't I also become a topsy-turvy rabbit?!"



"You too, Father?"

"Right. I'll have Kenta Rabbit go to the office in my place. Father Rabbit will stay home and play all day."

"Aha yes! What a great idea! Oh, I'm so glad, so... but no, wait, it can't be..." Kenta Rabbit was so confused.

"I quit! Topsy-turvy is finished!" Kenta cried. "Oh, look at me!"

Kenta Rabbit hurriedly pulled his trousers off his head and stepped out of his shirt. Then he hopped over to the foot end of his bed, dove under the blanket, and crawled up to pop out headfirst at the top.

"Good morning!" Shouted Kenta joyfully.

Kenta Rabbit put on his shirt and trousers, just like he always did, and ran out to his bicycle in the garage.

Translated by T.M. HOFFMAN

Illustrated by YURIKO YAMAWAKI

(From *Kenta Usagi* published by Nora Shoten Publishers)

Vietnam

YOUNG CHICKENS AND THE FOX

Folktale

A brood of chicks lived with their mother in a nice coop in the garden. They behaved themselves well, sharing the food they or Mother Chicken found, and never quarreling with each other.

A cunning fox lived nearby in her cave under a tree. Every time she saw the chickens, she said to herself, "Gee, I wish I could have them for dinner! They say that the flesh of a young mother chicken makes a very healthy meal!"

One morning, the young chickens woke up to find their mother gone. At first they thought she was out finding food for their breakfast, but after a while they became worried. They ran out of the coop, calling, "Mummy, where are you?" She was nowhere to be seen, and the chicks all burst into tears.

Their cries woke up the old bat who was sleeping under the leaves of a tree beside the road. He looked down and chirped, "Maybe the fox stole your mother while you were asleep. I saw that fox hanging around the garden yesterday."

The chicks prepared themselves to save their mother. The eldest chick told her sisters and brothers, "Now you stop crying and get ready! Each of us should get a stick, and then we will go to the fox's cave to free Mother."

On the way to the cave they met a hornet who asked, "Where are you going with those sticks?"

"We are going to fight the fox to save our mother," they answered.

"Then I'll go with you," said the hornet. Later, an

eel also joined them when he learned that the chicks were going to save their mother.

When they arrived at the cave, the fox was not there. They went into the cave, but didn't find Mother Chicken. The eldest chick said, "We can't look for Mother now, for the fox may come back any time. We should fight her first. Now, Brother Eel will lie behind the door, and you, Sister Hornet, will be in the corner. The rest of us should find hiding places. Get ready to attack as soon as the fox comes back."

A few minutes later, the fox came back, bringing in some seasoning. Her mouth watered as she thought of having Mother Chicken for lunch. She opened the door and stepped inside. But she slipped and fell flat on the ground as she stepped on the eel. Before she could scramble to her feet, the hornet flew out from the corner to sting her all over. Then the chickens came out from their hiding places and beat her hard with their sticks.

The fox was so badly hurt that she could not move. She begged, "Please don't kill me! Your mother is still safe in the cage over there. I won't do it again, so spare me, please." The chicks replied, "You foxes are cruel liars. Nobody would ever believe you. We shall not have mercy on such a cruel creature as you."

After the fox was killed, the chicks went to the cage and freed their mother. Mother Chicken was so happy and proud of her brave children.

The mother and young chickens thanked the eel and the hornet for helping them, and they all went home and lived happily ever after.

Translated by NGUYEN THANH CHAU

Illustrated by NGUYEN XUAN THANG

China

LAZY BEARS BUY WATERMELONS

by
CHEN QIUYING

There are two brothers in the bear family, and both of them are very lazy. The mother calls the elder brother 'Elder Lazy' and the younger one 'Younger Lazy'.

It is summer time, hot and sultry. The cicadas are chirping in the trees. In the little cabin, the mother feels so uncomfortable.

Younger Lazy says, "On such a hot day it would be so nice to have a watermelon to eat!" Elder Lazy responds, "Certainly, watermelon is sweet and it eases our thirst. Yes, but who is going to buy one?"

Younger Lazy says, "You are older than I, so you should go to buy it." Elder Lazy replies, "You run faster than I, so you should go!"

"You should go!"

"You should!"

The mother bids them to quiet down. "Don't argue so! If you really want a melon, then go to buy one together. You won't have it if you are lazy!"

Both brothers are very hungry for watermelon, so

they set out together to buy one. They walk across the green field and the forest where the wild flowers grow until they come to the melon field run by Grandfather Goat.

What a big melon garden! It is covered with long, thick vines on which big melons are growing.

Elder Lazy says to Grandfather Goat, "Please choose a big melon for me!" And his brother says, "Please choose a sweet one for me!"

"Sure, sure!" The old goat says with a smile. He looks here and there in the field until he finds a very big melon that will surely be sweet to eat.

The elder brother pays the goat and begins walking home with the melon, but soon he complains that the melon is too heavy for him to carry. He demands that his brother carry it for some time.

The younger one picks it up with a frown on his

face. He walks only a few steps and then puts down the melon, saying that it is too heavy. He demands that his brother take it.

They quarrel and quarrel until Younger Lazy touches the melon, and it rolls forward. "Brother, I think we can let the melon roll itself back home!"

That ends the quarrel, and they join hands to roll the melon away.

Rolling across the beach and the grassland, the melon comes to bears' home.

"Mummy, we've bought a big, sweet melon!"

The mother puts the melon into the water basin to wash it and then puts it on the table to cut it.

"Our melon must be very, very sweet. The flesh must be red and delicious," the younger brother says. "Please give me a big piece!"

The mother cuts it open, only to find the flesh all turned into red water. It flows over the table and down onto the floor!

Elder Lazy and Younger Lazy are so disappointed, but there is nothing that they can do.

Whose fault is it?

Translated by BI BINGBIN

Illustrated by WU DAISHENG

Philippines

THE CITY MOUSE AND THE BARRIO MOUSE

by
ARACELI MARASIGAN VILLAMIN

City Mouse and Barrio* Mouse were cousins. One day City Mouse visited his cousin.

Barrio Mouse: Come into my little house. It is small and dark, but I have a big playground. The rice fields are wide and the meadows are clean.

City Mouse: Your house is very dark. Don't you have lights?

Barrio Mouse: I have no lights, but the sun is bright. Come and eat some *palay*. Do you like corn?

City Mouse: No, I don't eat *palay*. I don't like corn. Is that all your food?

Barrio Mouse: Sometimes there are plenty of grains. During harvest time the farmer keeps some *palay*. We have corn and *mungo*, too.

City Mouse: Is that all you eat? *Palay*, corn, *mungo*?

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* Barrio: village

Don't you have cheese and butter? Don't you have any meat?

Barrio Mouse: No, I have no cheese or butter. Sometimes there is left-over meat.

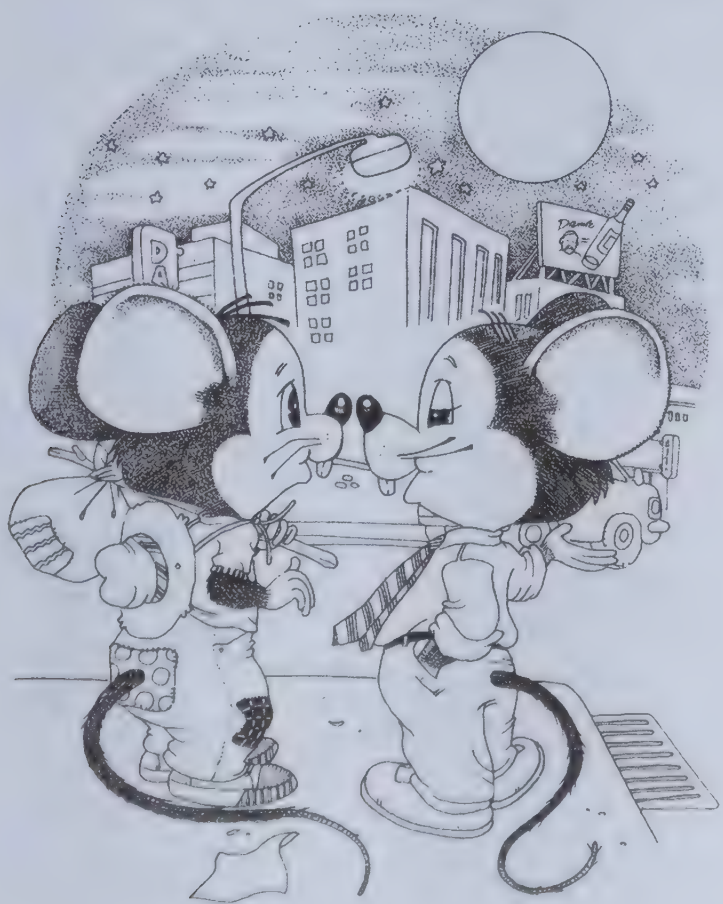
City Mouse: Have you ever tasted cakes or cookies?

Barrio Mouse: No, I haven't, but sometimes I have fruits like bananas, mangoes and papayas. They are good to eat. These yellow fruits make my eyes bright.

City Mouse: I feel sorry for you. You have not tasted the finest foods like ham, fried chicken or hotdogs.

Come with me to the city. Then you will see big houses. There are big markets full of food. There are large stores full of clothes. There are also stores for shoes and other things.

Barrio Mouse: All right. I'll go with you.



So Barrio Mouse went with his cousin to the city. They arrived at night.

Barrio Mouse: Why is it so noisy? At home everything is quiet at night.

City Mouse: Those are cars, buses, and trucks. Many city people travel at night.

Barrio Mouse: My head aches from all that noise.

City Mouse and Barrio Mouse reached the big house.

City Mouse: Come in. This is my master's house. Isn't it big? Isn't it beautiful?

Barrio Mouse: Yes, it is. Oh, but what are those bright lights? Are they big stars?

City Mouse: No, those are lights, electric lights. Look at those foods on the table! Come here. I'll show you.

Barrio Mouse looked at the food on the table. He saw fried chicken and *adobo*.

City Mouse: Eat this. Mmm-mm-deli-cious! Here is some cheese. Eat it with bread. Here are some cookies and cake. Come on. Let's eat.

City Mouse gave his cousin some cheese and bread. He gave him some cookies and cakes, and fried chicken and ham. While they were eating, two big dogs came in.

Dogs: Bow-wow-wow! Bow-wow-wow!

City Mouse: Let's run! The dogs have come.

Barrio Mouse: Wait. Let's take our food.

City Mouse: No, leave the food there. The dogs will kill us. Run as fast as you can.

The two mice ran into a dark hole. The dogs could not catch them, but Barrio Mouse was so afraid that he could not speak.

City Mouse: All right. The dogs have gone. Let us go back and eat.

Barrio Mouse: Oh! No. I cannot eat now. I want to

go home. I cannot live here. Your city is noisy. You have much food. But we are not safe here. It is better to live in the barrio. It is quiet there. The dogs are friendly. I will live longer there.

So Barrio Mouse went away. He went back to his quiet little home.

Illustrated by DANILO REYES

Pakistan

THE LION AND THE GOAT

by
MOHAMMAD HANIF QURESHI

Once upon a time, an old goat became separated from her herd. It was evening, and growing dark with night. The goat was worried. She had to reach her village soon.

When she realized that she could not reach her place in the darkness, she decided to spend the night nearby. She saw a cave near a hill. The old goat decided to take shelter in the cave, and walked in. Suddenly, she was face to face with a ferocious lion who lived in the cave.

She could not run, nor could she fight with the lion, but she quickly hit upon a plan.

The lion could not believe his eyes. No animal had ever been so courageous as to enter his cave. He watched the goat for sometime, then spoke up, "Who are you and why have you come here?"

The goat replied boldly, "I am the Queen of the Jungle Goats. I have sworn that I will chew up fifty cheetas, twenty elephants and ten lions. Until now, I have chewed fifty cheetas and twenty elephants, and

I am now in search of ten lions to keep my vow."

The lion was horrified to hear this, for he thought that the goat was speaking the truth. He said, "I want to take a bath before my death."

The goat agreed, and the lion ran swiftly out of the cave.

The lion met a jackal on the path. The jackal asked him, "Oh, King of the Jungle, where are you running to?"

The lion replied, "Tonight, an animal that looks like a goat has come to my cave, but this beast eats even the lion. I have run away to save my life."

The cunning jackal smiled and said that he understood. "Let us go into the cave and enjoy the feast together."

When the goat saw the lion and jackal coming towards the cave, she was horrified, frightened but she did not loose heart. She said sarcastically to the jackal, "Oh, you worthless jackal! I told you to bring ten lions,

and you have brought only one. Stand still, I shall punish you for your disobedience."

Hearing this, the lion thought that the jackal had deceived him. He leapt upon the jackal and tore him to pieces. Then the lion ran speedily away and did not once look back.

The goat slept that night in peace, her courage and wit having saved her life. The poor lion had to spend the whole night wandering about in the jungle.

Translated and illustrated by the author

Malaysia

THE STUBBORN LITTLE FISH

by
ALIMAH SALAM

Once there was a little fish who lived in a pond. He had a good friend, a tadpole. This little fish and the tadpole were always swimming, finding food and playing together.

One morning, the little fish was surprised to see a pair of legs near the tadpole's tail. The little fish asked the tadpole why he had legs.

"I'm not a fish. I'm a tadpole, a baby frog. Later, when I have grown, I will no longer stay here," explained the tadpole.

"You're lying!" Said the little fish.

"If you don't believe me, see for yourself later on," said the tadpole.

The little fish was very worried. He had not seen the tadpole for three days. He searched everywhere for his friend. Where could he be?

A few days later, the tadpole appeared again. The little fish was so happy, but once again he was surprised. The tadpole had another pair of legs. This time the legs

were in front of the other legs. Oh, and the tail had grown shorter.

"Where have you been all this time?" Asked the little fish.

"I've been to the land. Didn't I tell you I couldn't stay long here? See, now I have four legs. It won't be long now until I will be living on land for good," said the tadpole. "Please don't call me tadpole anymore now. Just call me Frog. Good bye, Fish!"

The little fish blinked, confused by the words of his friend. He couldn't believe what he heard and saw, for formerly his friend could swim like a fish. He had no legs before, but now he looked so different.

The little fish was left alone in the pond. Eventually he grew big.

One day while the fish was swimming around searching for food, a frog suddenly leaped into the water. It was Frog, his old friend. Fish was so happy to see his friend again.

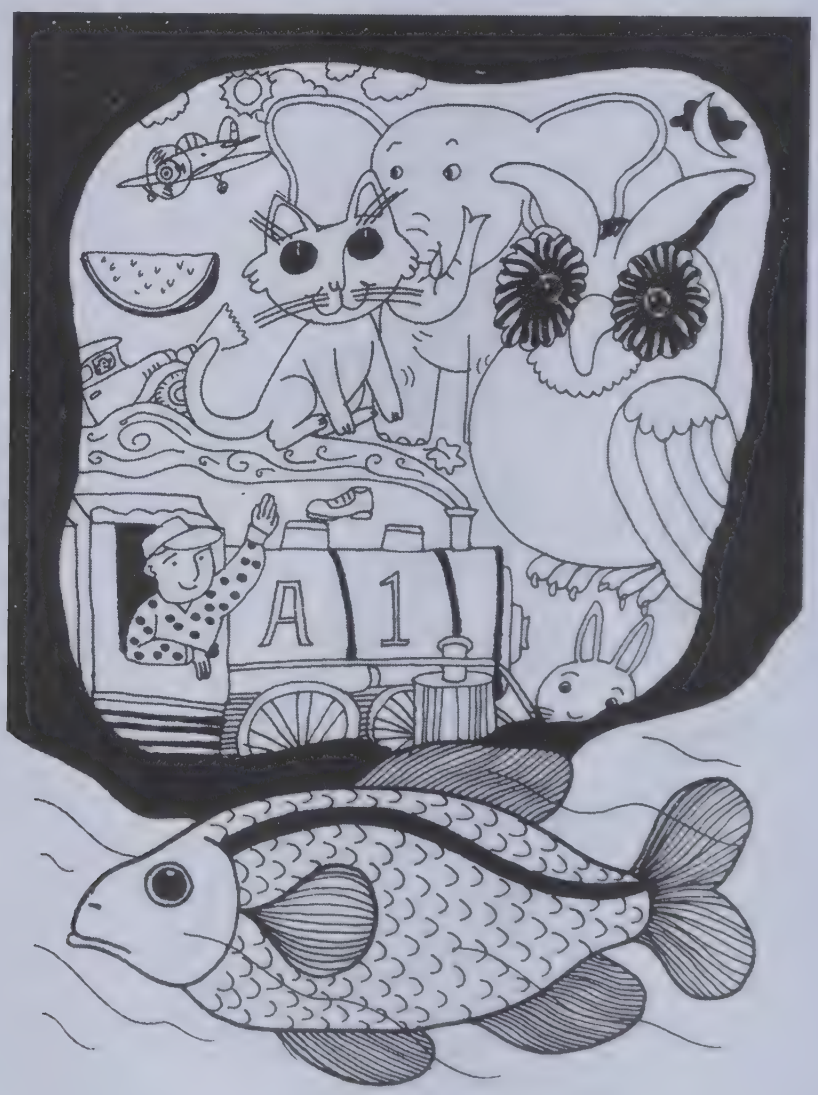
"Where have you been?" Asked Fish.

"I've been on the land," said Frog, and he told Fish about his experiences there.

"Who are your friends there?" Asked Fish after listening to his friend's stories.

"I have lots of friends—cows, birds, cats and many others," said Frog.

"Can I follow you to the land? I would like to meet them," asked Fish.



"How can that be? You can't breathe on land. You would die," explained Frog.

"But I would like to see the cow, the bird and the other friends you told me about just now," begged the Fish.

"There's no need for you to go. I'll describe them to you," said Frog. So Frog described all his friends on land. Fish tried to imagine what the animals looked like, but still he was not satisfied.

"What else do you see on land?" Asked Fish again.

"There are people, children, toys and lots of other things on land," continued Frog.

They talked until night. Fish was sad because he

could not go on land to see those wonders, and that night he could not sleep. His mind was full of the various things he had heard about that day.

The next morning, Fish swam about looking for food. Suddenly, he saw on the surface of the water the shadow of a bird flying. He wanted to see the bird so much that he plucked up his courage and tried to leap onto the river bank. With a single leap he was up on the bank, but before he could open his eyes, he was gasping for breath. He started to groan. Luckily for him, Frog was nearby. He, too, was looking for food.

Frog quickly hopped over to find Fish already unconscious. Without any delay, Frog pushed his friend into the pond. Fish immediately became conscious again in the water. He was so surprised, and he asked Frog what had happened.

Frog smiled. "I told you that the land is not for you. It doesn't matter whether you're on land or in water. Everything is fine and beautiful. Why wouldn't you listen?"

"Oh, but I'm not satisfied staying just here," continued Fish.

"You should be thankful," advised Frog. "There are not many creatures who can stay in the water forever like you can."

Fish smiled and swam happily among the water weeds. He realized that what his friend said was true.

Translated by AMILAH ABD. RAHMAN

Illustrated by ZAINUDDIN JAMIL

Indonesia

TWO BROTHERS KILL THE GIANT

by
DRA. DELOYANA KUSUMA

Once upon a time there were two brothers and a sister. The eldest brother was named Wanggala, the second brother Panggelawang, and their young sister was Niabai.

The two brothers and their sister lived in peace, helping each other in every possible way. They always did their farming and gardening together.

Every day, Wanggala and Panggelawang went out to work in the garden. Niabai stayed at home and cooked, and after cooking she spun thread. Niabai was very dedicated to her work, and the thread that she spun became very long.

One day, a giant suddenly came to their house. He kidnapped Niabai and carried her to his house. He planned to make her as a side-dish for his dinner.

When Wanggala and Panggelawang came home from work, they were surprised to find that their young sister was not at home. They only saw the thread that had been spun by Niabai lying stretched out along the

road. Wanggala and Panggelawang set off the thread to follow. They were sure that she had laid it out for them.

Wanggala and Panggelawang went on and on, following the thread, until at last they reached the giant's house. Then they knew that their young sister had been kidnapped by the giant.

The two brothers approached the giant's house, and Wanggala knocked on the door.

"What are you here for?" Asked the giant who opened the door. She was a woman giant, the wife of the giant Watuware. The giants had a son named Wakeng.

"We need a job. Is there any work we can do for you?" Asked Wanggala.

The giant was very glad to hear their offer and Wanggala and Panggelawang were then and there hired to work.

"You will now cook. Chop up the girl in that cage. She will be a tasty dish for us," said the giant to Wanggala and Panggelawang. Then the giant went out to the garden.

Wanggala and Panggelawang worked quickly. They soon released and hid their sister, and then hurriedly cooked Wakeng, the child of the giant, as a dish for his parents.

Finally, they were out of the house. Their last bit of work was to saw nearly through the support logs of the bridge customarily walked on by the giants. If the giant tried to cross, it would break and send him crashing down onto the spears that they planted under the bridge.

Soon the giant and his wife came home. They were very hungry, so they began to eat their dinner. Then, all at once, a bird on the roof sang out, "Chi! Watuare and his wife are eating their own child!"

The giants were very surprised. They examined the dish they were eating.

What the bird sang was really true, for Watuare and his wife found their son's finger in the soup.

Watuare's wife ran to her son's room, and there she found his head. Both of the giants were furious, and they called out for Wanggala and Panggelawang at once. They discovered that the brothers were gone, so out they rushed to hunt for them.

Wanggala and his brother were hiding at the far end of the bridge. The two giants ran full-speed right to the middle of the bridge. The bridge broke under the weight of the heavy giants, and down they fell to the valley below. Both giants landed on the spears set there by Wanggala and his brother, and died at once.

Wanggala and his brother went back to the giant's house to retrieve their sister Niabai, and there, they found several other villagers locked up in cages. The brothers and their sister set all of them free, and they all went home to live in peace.

Translated by DRA. NANI WURYANI

China

A MONKEY EATING FRUITS

by
LIU XINWU

A monkey comes to a watermelon field. The melons look so good that he picks one up to eat.

A bullock nearby calls out to him, "May be you don't know how to eat it. Let me tell you..."

"No! Quiet! It's none of your business." The monkey bites into the skin of the melon, but then he throws the melon to the ground. "Yecch! How distasteful!"

The bullock tells him that he should have eaten the inside instead of the skin.

"Yes, of course. We should eat the flesh of the fruits instead of the skin. I know that."

Then the monkey comes to a field of muskmelon. He selects one melon, breaks it open and takes out the flesh, putting a handful into his mouth. Then a donkey nearby tells him, "You should have eaten the shell instead of the flesh."

The monkey spits out the flesh and the seeds, and throws away the shell of the muskmelon. "Now I

understand—eat the shell, not the flesh!"

Next, he comes upon a walnut tree and picks a green walnut. A magpie shouts at him, "Be careful!" But the monkey replies, "Mind your own business! I know, I should eat the shell." He takes one bite of the green shell, but it is very bitter. It tastes so awful that he has to go to the riverside to wash out his mouth.

Then the magpie comes to tell him, "Actually, you should eat the nut inside the shell!"

Surely, now the monkey understands. He soon comes to a pear tree and takes down one pear. He smashes open the pear and puts the seed of the fruit into his mouth. Oh, this also tastes so bad that he has to spit it out.

The monkey angrily throws the pear into a ditch. Then he bounces away, crying, "What good are they? The watermelon, the muskmelon, the walnut, the pear—none of them taste good. I will never again eat any fruits."

Can you tell what is wrong with the little monkey?

Translated by BI BINGBIN

Illustrated by WU DAISHENG

Mongolia

YAGANDURAN AND HIS PINK HORSE

Folktale

Once upon a time in a certain kingdom a boy called Yaganduran lived with his old mother. He had only two treasures—a pink horse, and a toy bow and arrow made of bone. He hunted and shot one deer a day. Then, one time he didn't go hunting for three days.

His mother went to fetch water from the golden spring, and saw there a stag and a doe. They were butting each other, saying, "Yaganduran is lying in his yurt with his horse outside and the bone bow and arrow on the yurt. If only we could meet him now!"

The old woman gathered a load of argal* and went straight home to tell her son what she had heard and seen. Yaganduran mounted his pink horse, took his bone bow and arrow, rode to the golden spring and shot the deer. All at once they dropped deel** made of coral and flew up into the sky.

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* argal: dried dung used as fuel

** deel: national costume of Mongolia

He took the coral deel home and hid it in a black trunk.

The next morning Yaganduran woke up and found himself in a five-walled white yurt with plates and bowls of rich and delicious food. He went out and saw a boundless steppe full of cattle. It made his brain reel, and he stopped lying at home in bed and began to graze the cattle.

Everytime he went to the pasture he said to his mother, "Don't tell anybody that we've grown rich, and don't show anybody the coral deel."

One day it came to the king's ear that Yaganduran had grown suddenly rich. The king sent his old maid to Yaganduran's mother to ask about their fortune, but

the old woman said not a word. The maid coaxed the old woman. "We two are of the same age and the same size. What should we have to hide from each other? Come on, tell me."

The old woman finally gave in and told her everything. Then the old maid talked Yaganduran's mother into showing her the coral deel, and while the old woman was looking the other way, the old maid ran away with the deel.

Yaganduran came home late in the evening and found his mother without the deel. He lay sadly on his bed and soon fell asleep. In the morning he found himself in a poor hut again.

The old maid brought the coral deel to the king. He put it on, gathered his officials and asked, "Do I not look fine with this coral deel on?"

The officials chorused, "Wonderful! Wonderful!" Only one official kept silent. The king asked him, "Why do you say nothing?"

"You look fine with the coral deel on, but you'd look much better if you'd wash your face with milk of the white heavenly she-camel."

"Where is that she-camel, and who will fetch her for me?"

"Yaganduran, who managed mysteriously to get rich, will perhaps fetch it somehow."

The king called for the boy and ordered him to fetch the milk of the white heavenly she-camel. Taking his bone bow and arrow, Yaganduran mounted his pink horse and set off far into the north in search of the she-camel.

All of a sudden, his horse said in a human voice,

"Well, master, do you see that black thing like a mountain or a cloud? That is the calf of the white heavenly she-camel. Cut a strip three fingers thick from my rump, tie up the calf with it, and pull him along at a gallop."

Yaganduran loved his horse dearly, but he had no choice but to cut a strip from his rump. Then the horse rolled over on the ground, and the wound became a brown scab. Again he turned over, and it became black, and the third time he turned over, the wound was fully healed. The boy tied up the calf as he was instructed and pulled him along at a gallop.

All at once they saw the she-camel chasing them. She had nearly caught up with them when Yaganduran released the calf and galloped away. Then the horse said, "We'll sleep here. Tomorrow before dawn we'll follow the tracks of the she-camel, and find where her milk dripped. We'll take it and return home."

Indeed, the next morning they followed the tracks of the she-camel and found a pool of congealed milk. The boy took some of it and went back. He gave the milk to the king and went home to sleep.

The king washed his face with the milk and called to the officials, "Do I not look fine?"

The officials chorused, "Wonderful!"

The same official again kept silent. When the king asked why he was silent, he replied, "Oh, my king looks fine after washing his face with the milk of the heavenly camel. But if you stick a phoenix feather in your hat, you'll look even more brilliant."

"Where is that noble fowl? Who'll fetch me its feather?"

"Oh, that's very simple. If you send Yaganduran who got so rich he'll fetch it somehow."

By the king's order Yaganduran went in search of a phoenix. He went on and on. In the distance he saw a white yurt. He approached the yurt and went in. Three girls, probably sisters, were sitting there. One of them sat crying, another was deep in thought, and the third girl sat there smiling.

Yaganduran greeted them, and asked the crying girl, "Why are you crying so bitterly?"

"We were nine sisters. A giant snake ate our six sisters and left the three of us. I'm crying because the snake will eat me today."

The boy asked the second girl, "Why are you deep in thought?"

"Tomorrow is my turn," she replied.

Then the third girl spoke up, "He will eat me the day after tomorrow. There is still time for me," she smiled.

Yaganduran then asked, "Where does that giant snake come from? I'll give him something to remember!"

"When the sun is about to set, the snake comes riding on a hurricane out of the sunset and swallows one of us."

Meanwhile, the sun had begun to set, and the wind blew ever stronger. Yaganduran looked out and saw a big black thing, not exactly a mountain or a cloud, toward the sunset. He took it for the snake's head and shot his arrow. The wind calmed down and the black thing disappeared. Perhaps it had died. The girls, full of joy, welcomed him.

"Please, come in and have a rest. Mother will come soon. You must meet her!"

The boy went in and fell asleep. He woke up to a violent wind, and everything inside the yurt was blowing about. "What's happening?" Asked the boy.

"That's our mommy coming." The girls replied.

The wind ceased in a moment and a beautiful woman appeared and greeted the boy. She asked him, "What do you desire? I'll do my best to help you, the one who saved the lives of my daughters."

"I'm in search of a phoenix feather for the king. Do you know anything about it? I'll be grateful if you help me."

The woman smiled,

"I will help you. I am the phoenix."

The boy took a phoenix feather to the king. Overjoyed by the feather, he gave back to Yaganduran his coral deel, and the boy lived with his old mother happily ever after.

Illustrated by BADMAARAGIIN TSOG

New Zealand

THE FLEAS

by
JANE BUXTON

Mum Flea, Dad Flea and their three children, Hippy, Hoppy and Happy, all lived on Old Brown Dog. They loved living on Old Brown Dog. He was soft and slow and comfortable. He was too old to run about much, so he slept most of the day in the sun.

"It's a nice, safe place to bring up our children," said Dad Flea.

"Yes, it's very quiet on Old Brown," said Mum Flea.

"It's too quiet," said Hippy.

"It's too safe," said Hoppy.

"It's too boring," said Happy. "We want to have adventures."

Just then they heard Mrs. Lea say, "Come on, Old Brown, time for some flea powder!"

"O-oh!" Said Mum Flea. "Time to go!"

So Mum hopped, Dad hopped, Hippy hopped, Hoppy hopped and Happy hopped. They all hopped onto a nice hairy leg that was standing close by.

"What's this?" Said Hippy, biting the leg.

"It doesn't taste too good," said Hoppy.

"It doesn't taste as good as Old Brown," said Happy.

The leg jumped up and down and started to scratch.

Mrs. Lea said, "Have you got fleas, too, Pussy? Come here and I'll powder you, too."

"Let's go!" Said Dad Flea. So Dad hopped, Mum

hopped, Hippy hopped, Hoppy hopped and Happy hopped. They all hopped on to the leg of a big black dog, who was visiting Old Brown.

Someone whistled and called, "Here, Rip! Come here!" And the big dog raced away with her new family of fleas.

"Good one!" Said Hippy.

"Neat!" Said Hoppy.

"Now we'll have adventures," said Happy.

Mum Flea and Dad Flea looked at each other and shook their heads. They liked a quiet life.

Rip was a pig dog. Her owner took her out hunting wild pigs in the bush. The fleas had to hold on tight to Rip's leg as she crashed through the scrub.

"Lie low! Lie close to the skin!" Shouted Dad Flea.

Rip came to a river.

"Hop higher!" Shouted Mum. And she hopped, Dad hopped, Hippy hopped, Hoppy hopped and Happy hopped. They all hopped onto Rip's tummy.

The water got deeper. They all moved up to her back. It got deeper still, and they all hopped onto Rip's head.

When Rip had swum across the river, she rolled and rolled in the long grass to dry herself.

"Help!" Said Hoppy.

"Hold tight!" Shouted Dad Flea. "She can't keep this up forever."

By the time Rip had finished hunting for the day, Mum Flea and Dad Flea were tired out. Hippy, Hoppy, and Happy did not have a drop of hop left in them.

"Well, that was an adventure," said Hippy.

"That was lots of adventures," said Hoppy.

"I've had enough adventures," said Happy. "I wish we were back on Old Brown Dog."

Mum Flea and Dad Flea looked at each other and shook their heads. It was too late now.

"Let's sit down and have dinner, my pets," said Mum Flea. "We've had so many adventures today, we haven't had time to eat."

"You'll feel better with a nice drop of blood inside you," said Dad.

While they were having dinner, Rip was walking slowly home with her master. They were tired, too, after their day's hunting, but not too tired to visit their friends, Mrs. Lea and Old Brown Dog.

"Hop!" Said Mum Flea. And she hopped, Dad hopped, Hippy hopped, Hoppy hopped and Happy hopped. They all hopped back on to Old Brown. He still smelled a little of flea powder, but the flea family didn't mind. It was so good to be home again.

"Home, sweet home!" Said Happy.

Illustrated by DICK FRIZZELL

Sri Lanka

ASOKA THE PONY

Folktale

Asoka was a little pony who never wanted to help anyone. His mother was very angry and said, "You did not even help your sister when she fell down and hurt her leg. Today, I want you to go around this coconut land, and when you have helped even one person, come back and tell me. Then only will I give you your lunch."

Asoka cried and said, "I am only a small pony," but his mother said, "Even a small pony must try to help others. You must not always think only of yourself." She was so angry that Asoka quickly ran away. He wanted to find someone he could help, and then come back soon for his lunch.

He saw a beautiful butterfly resting on a lotus flower. "I'm sure that butterfly is unable to fly. That is why she is sitting on that lotus. I will help her." He moved towards the lotus flower, but the butterfly saw him coming, and flew away in fright.

The lotus scolded him, "You silly little pony, the butterfly was drinking nectar when you frightened her off. Don't stay around here anymore. If you stand here

you will frighten all the little insects that come to rest on me. Away with you!"

The lotus looked red and angry. Poor Asoka quickly ran off, thinking, "But I only wanted to help."

As he trotted along, he saw Meera the old cow under a large mara tree. Meera was very tired, and was fast asleep. Asoka stood and looked at her. Her body was shaking and shivering, so he thought, "Meera is sick. I will pour some water over her. Her eyes are closed. She must be very sick." He took a bucket of water and threw it on her.

Meera got up with a start, and saw Asoka with the bucket. "You silly little pony! Did you not see that I was sleeping? I had to work all morning, carrying the coconuts to the big house, and now you have thrown water on me. Go away, you silly pony!" She shouted. Asoka ran away, afraid of the angry big cow.

Asoka was tired and hungry. It was almost evening and he had not yet helped anyone. He stopped near a small pond to drink some water. There he saw Mulin the big fish come to the top of the water, gasp, and then sink down again. Asoka was happy. He was sure Mulin needed help, that he wanted to get out of the pond.

"Mulin, my friend, I will help you to get out of the pond," said Asoka. He bent down, picked Mulin up and laid him on the grass. Mulin struggled and whistled, "Put me back into the pond, you silly pony. I need water to breathe."

Asoka stood watching him. He could not understand why Mulin was jumping about so much. "Mulin, you can live happily on the grass. I have now helped one person, so I can go home and have my lunch!" He shouted. The ducks and goats living nearby heard him, and came running to see what had happened.

Poor Mulin was still flopping about, trying to get back into the water. Old Grey Duck quickly pushed Mulin into the pond, and then scolded Asoka. "You silly little pony, you could have killed Mulin." The goats and ducks gathered around Asoka and started singing, "You silly little pony."

Poor Asoka sat down and cried. Old Grey Duck asked, "Why are you crying?" Asoka replied, "My

mother said I cannot come home until I have helped someone, and I have not been able to do so yet. It is late, I've lost my way, and I am hungry—boo-hoo." He cried loudly.

"Come," said the grey duck, "I'll take you home," and she led the way to the pony's home. Mother Pony was watching the road, and she ran out to meet Asoka.

"I was so worried! Why are you crying?"

"I could not help anyone. Everyone I tried to help said I was a silly little pony, and now I am hungry and tired."

Old Grey Duck said, "First help those in your family, then you can help others. Then you will be a good pony." Asoka snuggled up close to his mother and said, "I will, I will."

Illustrated by SYBIL WETTASINGHE

Thailand

FATHER'S TREASURE

by
CHUTARAT SUKSATIT

Once upon a time, there was a rich old man living with his two sons in a village far from the city. He was very sick. Before dying, he called his two beloved sons, gave them his treasure, and instructed them with three riddles on how to take care of the treasure.

"Oh, my dear sons, if you want to be rich like me all of your lives, you must follow what I am telling you now."

"First, you must have dinner with the big light. Second, you must surround your house with the teeth of animals. Third, I am giving you some tamarind seeds. You must know how to eat them so they last long."

"Yes, Father, we will do as you say," answered both of his sons together. The rich old man gave his treasure in equal shares to his sons, and then died.

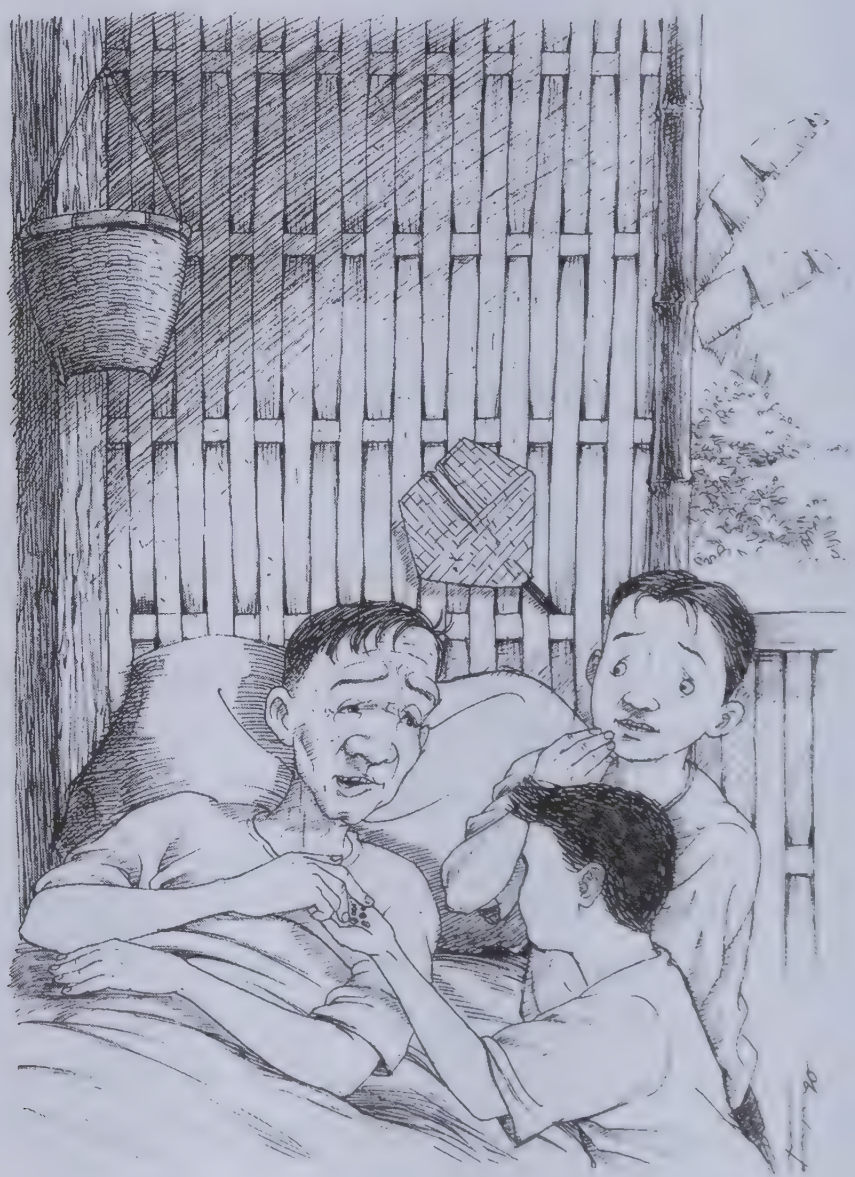
The younger son remained in his father's house, while his elder brother took his treasure away and lived in a new house he built in the city.

The younger son was a simple, silly man. Before

his dinner, he told his servant to light the big lamp. As for his house, he surrounded it with a fence made from elephant's ivory.

Then, everyday he roasted tamarind seeds for eating. Before long, the oil was used up, a thief stole his ivory fence, and not a single tamarind seed was left in his kitchen. He became poor.

One day, he thought of his elder brother. He expected that his brother should now be as poor as he was, for his father had divided the treasure equally. He set out to visit his elder brother in the city.



When he entered his elder brother's house, he was amazed to see how big the house was, and that many people lived in it.

"Oh, my dear brother, why you are still rich? I did follow what father told us to do, but I become poorer and poorer," cried the younger son.

"On my way to the city, I thought about father's riddle. The first is to have dinner with the big light. It means to have dinner before sunset, for this will save oil."

"The second riddle is to surround the house with the teeth of animals. I thought of keeping dogs to protect my house from thieves."

"The third riddle was that if you know how to eat the tamarind seeds, you will have food to eat for long.

During my trip to the city, I roasted some to eat, and the rest I threw around my house. Soon they grew into tamarind seeds, and I pick their pods for sale every year. See, my brother, how I obeyed our father's teaching. Truly, now I am a rich man forever," the elder brother said happily.

Translated by the author

Illustrated by TEERAPUN LOPAIBOON

Australia

THE BUNYIP OF BERKELEY'S CREEK

by
JENNY WAGNER

Late one night, for no particular reason, something stirred in the black mud at the bottom of Berkeley's Creek. The fish swam away in fright, and the night birds in the trees hid their heads under their wings.

When they looked again, something very large and very muddy was sitting on the bank. "What am I?" It murmured. "What am I, what am I, what am I?" The night birds again quickly hid their heads under their wings.

In the morning the thing was still sitting there, scraping the mud off itself to see what was underneath.

"What am I?" It kept saying. "What am I?"

But the night birds were all asleep.

A passing platypus* solved the problem. "You are a bunyip," he said. "Bunyip," murmured the bunyip

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* platypus: an egg-laying mammal of Australia with a broad, flat tail and a snout like a duck's bill

contentedly. "Bunyip."

Then he sat up straight and called out, "What do I look like?" But the platypus had dived into the creek.

"Am I handsome?" Called the bunyip. "Am I?"

But nobody answered him, and the bunyip went on sitting there for a long time, lost in thought.

Presently a wallaby* came by to drink at the creek.

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* wallaby: like a kangaroo but smaller

"What do bunyips look like?" Asked the bunyip.

"Horrible," said the wallaby. "They have webbed feet, and feathers."

"Fine, handsome feathers," said the bunyip hopefully.

"Horrible feathers," said the wallaby firmly, and finished her drink and hopped off.

"Handsome webbed feet?" Called the bunyip, but there was no answer.

The bunyip sighed and walked off to find someone else.

There was a rustling in the bushes behind him, and suddenly an emu* shot past.

"Wait!" Called the bunyip, running after him.

"What do bunyips look like?"

The emu stopped and considered.

"They have fur." He said at last, "And tails."

"How many tails?" Asked the bunyip.

"One to each bunyip," replied the emu.

"Fine, handsome tails," said the bunyip.

"Horrible tails," said the emu. "And even more horrible fur."

And he settled his feathers and crouched down low, then streaked off into the distance.

The bunyip wandered sadly along the creek. "Will someone tell me what bunyips look like?" He said, to anyone who would listen. But there was no answer.

Farther along the creek he met a man.

The man was busy with a notebook and pencil,

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* emu: a large, flightless Australian bird which looks similar to an ostrich

and did not look at the bunyip.

"Shh," he said, "I'm busy."

The bunyip waited for a long time, and then he said, very slowly and clearly, "Can you please tell me what bunyips look like?"

"Yes," said the man, without looking up. "Bunyips don't look like anything."

"Like nothing?" Said the bunyip.

"Like nothing at all," said the man.

"Are you sure?" Said the bunyip.

"Quite sure," said the man, and looked right through him.

"Bunyips simply don't exist."

The bunyip was shaken. Then he sighed a long, deep sigh.

"What a pity," he murmured. "What a pity, what a pity."

Then he walked slowly back to his waterhole, fished his belongings out of the water, packed them in his bunyip bag, and walked away.

No one saw him go.

The bunyip walked all day, and just as the sun was setting he came to a quiet, still billabong*. "This will do," said the bunyip to himself, "No one can see me here. I can be as handsome as I like."

He unpacked his bag, and laid his bunyip comb and mirror out on the sand, and put his billy* on to boil. No one saw him and no one spoke to him.

But late that night, for no particular reason, something stirred in the black mud at the bottom of the billabong.

The bunyip put his comb down in surprise, and stared. Something very large and very muddy was sitting on the bank.

"What am I?" It murmured. "What am I, what am I?"

The bunyip jumped up in delight. "You are a bunyip!" He shouted.

"Am I? Am I really?" Asked the other bunyip, and then, "What do I look like?"

"You look just like me," said the bunyip happily. And he lent her his mirror to prove it.

Illustrated by BEN COLE

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* billabong: aboriginal word for 'pond'

* billy: tin can used for boiling water for tea

Republic of Korea

THE GRANDMOTHER AND THE TIGER

by
KIM YOUNG-JU

Once upon a time, a grandmother lived alone in an isolated house at the foot of a mountain. On the mountain there lived a tiger that often came down to the grandmother's radish patch. He would pull radishes out and ruin the patch. If he did it in need of something to eat, the grandmother would let him do as he pleased, but since he did it only to amuse himself, the grandmother got very angry.

One day, the grandmother happened to meet the tiger as he was making a mess of the radishes. She thought that she had to do something to stop him, and a bright idea popped into her head. She said to the tiger gently, "Hey, tiger. Why do you eat those tasteless radishes? If you come tonight, I'll feed you delicious porridge with rice and red beans."

The tiger was very pleased at this invitation. He returned to the mountain, saying that he would come back at night.

The grandmother didn't make porridge. Instead, she first made a fire in an open charcoal stove and put it out in the back yard. Then she filled a jar in the kitchen with water, put much red pepper powder into the jar, and stuck many needles in a towel above the water jar. Finally, she paved the front part of the kitchen floor with cattle dung, spread a straw mat leading out the door, and then told a pack carrier to wait against the fence outside.

After making all these preparations, she waited for the tiger in her room. When it was dark, the tiger came.

"Grandma, here I am," said the tiger. The grandmother, pretending to welcome him with pleasure, opened the door with a smile. "Good evening, tiger! I'm very glad that you've come. Come in. Oh, my! Wait a minute. Please bring me the stove in from the backyard. I feel a little cold in my room."

The tiger went to the backyard and saw the charcoal fire dying in the stove.

"Grandma, the fire is dying out," said the tiger.

"Is it? Then blow the ashes, and the charcoal fire will glow again," said the grandmother.

The tiger blew and blew with his eyes wide open, and the ashes flew right into his eyes.

"Oh, my eyes!" Cried the tiger. He rubbed his eyes to ease the pain, but the harder he rubbed, the more

pain he felt. He shouted out in confusion, "Grandma, the ashes have blown into my eyes. I feel much pain. What shall I do?"

"Oh, dear!" She answered quickly, "There is a water jar in the kitchen. Wash them with that water."

The tiger rushed into the kitchen and hastily washed his eyes with the water in the jar.

Do you remember that the grandmother had put red-pepper powder into that water jar? What do you imagine happened to the tiger?

The pain in his eyes was so awful that he was about to go mad. "Ouch! My eyes! Grandma, I feel even more pain than before!" Cried the tiger.

"Oh, my dear! Then wipe them with the towel above the water jar," said the grandmother.

When the tiger, nearly blind, groped for the towel and wiped his eyes hard, the needles in the towel stung his eyes.

"Ouch! Ouch! What stings me?" Screamed the tiger, jumping up and down helplessly.

By that time, he realized that the grandmother had tricked him. He tried to escape, but running out of the kitchen, he slipped and fell down on the cattle dung.

As he hit the floor, the straw mat wrapped around him and he rolled toward the pack carrier. The pack carrier carried him on his back, strutted to the river, and threw him into the river.

After a good while, the tiger managed to swim out of the river. Yes, but he never again dared to come near the grandmother's radish patch.

Translated and illustrated by the author

Bangladesh

TUNTUNA AND TUNTUNI

by
JASIMUDDIN

There were once two tailor birds called Tuntuna and Tuntuni. They passed their days flying from the jack-fruit tree to the guava tree and then to the lichee tree, or they hopped from the brinjal plant to the chilli plant. And all the time they sang, "Ffrut ffrut, ffrut ffrut."

One day Tuntuna said to his wife, "My dear Tuntuni, I wish I had some money. I should like to buy a pretty new dress for you and a new suit for myself. I should like us to be dressed in brightly coloured clothes like the ones worn by the rich men of the land."

"Tuntuna," said little Tuntuni, "I have heard that in the jungle there are some pots of gold coins. How wonderful it would be if we could find one."

"I have heard that too, Tuntuni. I shall go and search in the jungle. I am sure I can find a pot of gold coins." Tuntuna became very excited and made plans for his long journey through the jungle.

"I shall stay here and look after our nest," said

Tuntuni. "Please come back quickly. I shall be very lonely."

So Tuntuna flew away. He searched all through the jungle—behind the sugar-cane and at the foot of the kapok tree, and all around the bamboo, banana and betel trees. But he found no pot of gold coins anywhere.

After many days of searching, he found a small coin, an anna* under a bush. He took it in his beak and carried it home to Tuntuni. The anna was very heavy for such a little bird, and Tuntuna was very hot when he reached his nest.

"Come quickly, Tuntuni, and see what I have found," he called.

"What has happened?" Asked Tuntuni. "Please tell me."

"Oh dear," said Tuntuna, "I am so hot. Please fan me, and then I shall tell you what has happened."

Tuntuni waved her wings to fan her husband. Then

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* anna: traditional unit of coin of Bangladesh

she said, "Now will you tell me what has happened?"

But Tuntuna said, "I am very tired. Please rub my feet, and afterwards I shall tell you what has happened."

So little Tuntuni rubbed her husband's feet for a long time, but still Tuntuna did not say anything. At last Tuntuni said, "Oh please won't you tell me what has happened now?"

Tuntuna began very slowly, "Something has happened that has never happened before."

"But what is it?" Said Tuntuni, who could not be patient any longer.

Tuntuna waited for a moment, then he said, "Tuntuni, we have become rich."

"Rich? What does that mean?" Said little Tuntuni, who had never heard that word before. "What happens when someone is rich?"

"Why, don't you know?" Said Tuntuna. "It means that from today we shall never have to catch our own food. We shall never again have to fly after insects or prick our feet on the thorny brinjal plants."

Poor little Tuntuni could not understand, and she began to cry. "Oh dear, oh dear, what does this mean? Are we going to be ill?"

"Of course not," said Tuntuna, laughing. "But you don't think that we shall tire ourselves looking for food now that we are rich, do you?"

"But what shall we eat?" Cried Tuntuni.

"We do not need to worry any more about food," said Tuntuna.

"Then how shall we keep alive?" Tuntuni asked.

Then Tuntuna showed her the coin he had found. "With this we can buy anything we want," he said.

"Anything?" Asked Tuntuni. "Can we buy chocolates and sweets and cakes and pastries?"

"Yes," said Tuntuna, "We can buy everything."

"Then I shall buy everything I want. I shall buy bracelets and necklace and earrings," said Tuntuni happily.

"And I shall buy a bicycle, an automobile and an aeroplane," said Tuntuna.

The two little birds sat together and thought of all the things they would buy with the anna. Then they put it in their nest and danced around it, singing,

"How much money does the king have?
That's how much money we have!"

They were so happy that they forgot about eating and sleeping and talking and all the other things they used to do. They just danced around their anna, singing,

"How much money does the king have?
That's how much money we have!"

One day, the king was out hunting with all his policemen and his soldiers and servants. He passed the tree where Tuntuna and Tuntuni had built their nest. The two little birds were still dancing round and round their anna and singing their song.

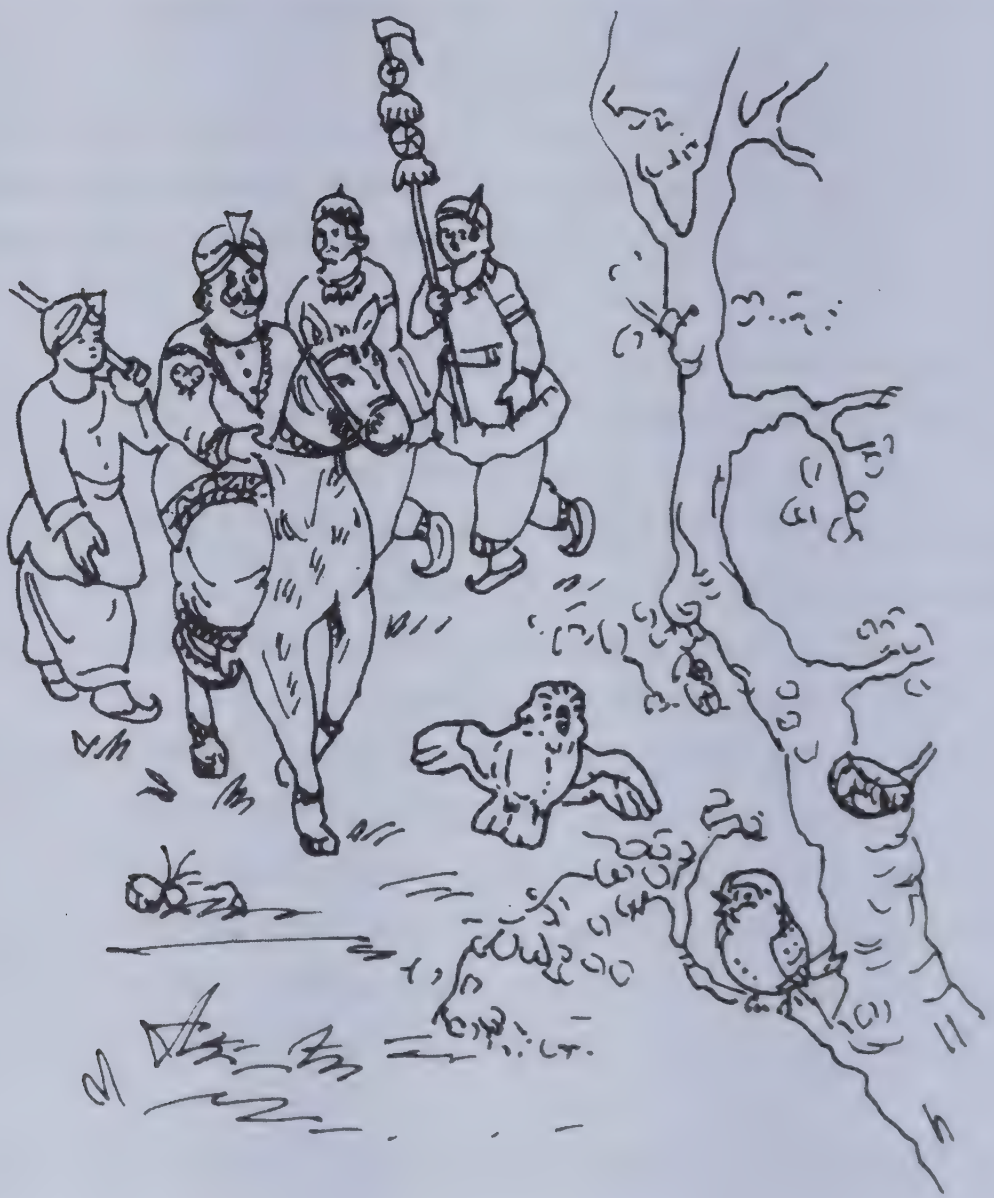
When the king heard the words of the song, he stopped and looked up into the tree. There he saw the two tiny birds, and he could not believe that they were telling the truth. He said to his chief of police, "These birds are very proud. Have they really as much money as I have? Go and see what the tailor birds have in their nest."

The chief of police climbed up the tree and looked

into the nest. Then he climbed down, and said, "Oh great King, I can see only one tiny anna in the nest."

This made the king very angry. "Do you mean that these two birds are so proud when all they have is just one little anna? I order you to take that anna and put it in the royal treasury, and tear down the nest of these silly little birds." The king was so angry that he began to shake like a banana leaf in the wind.

Then all the policemen and the soldiers and servants took the anna and put it in the royal treasury. They tore down the tailor birds' little nest but Tuntuna and



Tuntuni did not stop singing. They flew from tree to tree and over the heads of the king and all his men, singing,

"How much money does the king have?
That's how much money we have!"

This time the king was even angrier than before.

"Why do these birds go on singing?" He shouted.

"Have they no respect for the king? Catch them immediately."

As soon as he said this, all the policemen and the soldiers and servants ran to the cannon and began to shoot at the little tailor birds. But as soon as they aimed the cannon one way, the birds flew the other way. They were much too quick for the king's men.

The king became more and more angry and more and more impatient. At last he shouted to his commander-in-chief, "If you do not catch those birds, I shall cut off your head."

The commander-in-chief was very afraid. He walked away and sat down to think of how he could catch the birds. A woodcutter who was passing by said, "You will never catch those birds with a cannon. Call the fisherman and tell him to bring his nets. You can easily catch them with fishing nets."

The commander-in-chief quickly called the fisherman and told him to spread his nets all through the jungle. Soon the two little birds were caught in the nets, and the king was very pleased. He returned to his palace with Tuntuna in one hand and Tuntuni in the other hand.

In the palace, the king had one hundred and one queens. There was the queen with a fever, the queen

with long hair, the noisy queen, the sleepy queen, the quiet queen, the blind queen, the busy queen, the wicked queen, the queen who was always laughing, and many, many others. All the queens came to the gate to welcome the king, and they all said, "King, what have you brought home from the hunt today?"

The king replied, "I have brought home Tuntuna and Tuntuni. I caught them in the jungle."

All the queens wanted to see the two little birds. The king gave them to the queen with a fever, and then they were passed from one queen to another until they were given to the lazy queen. Now this queen was so lazy that she did not hold the birds tightly—first Tuntuna, then Tuntuni flew out of her hands.

Not one of the queens dared to tell the king what had happened, and they all went back to their rooms.

The next day, the king called all the wise men in the land to his court to judge the birds. They had to decide what punishment should be given to two birds who had no respect for the king.

The king ordered the birds to be brought into the court. He waited and waited, but they did not come. The king became impatient. He left the court and went to find the queens. "Where are the tailor birds?" He asked. All the queens looked at each other and nobody spoke.

Suddenly, the tailor birds came flying over the king's head. When he realized that the queens had let them go, the king was so angry that he took his sword and cut off the noses of the one hundred and one queens. Tuntuna and Tuntuni flew round the king's head, singing,

"Tuntuna, Tuntuni,
Tuntunis tun tun!
All the queens' noses
Are as red as roses!
Tun tun, tun tun, tun tun."

The king could not control his anger. "Catch those birds!" He shouted.

The fisherman was ordered to bring his nets to the palace. Soon the two birds were caught in the nets, and this time the king would not wait for his wise men to judge them. He took a glass of water and swallowed Tuntuna and Tuntuni.

The wise men shook their heads. One of them said to the king's first minister. "The first time the king laughs, the birds will fly out of his mouth."

So the first minister ordered a soldier to stand on each side of the king. "When the king laughs, the birds will fly out of his mouth," he said. "You must cut off their heads with your swords as soon as you see them."

Just then one of the queens came to talk to the king.

She was the queen who was always laughing. When the king turned to speak to her, the queen began to laugh. Of course, the king had to laugh, too, and as soon as he began laughing, the tailor birds flew out of his mouth.

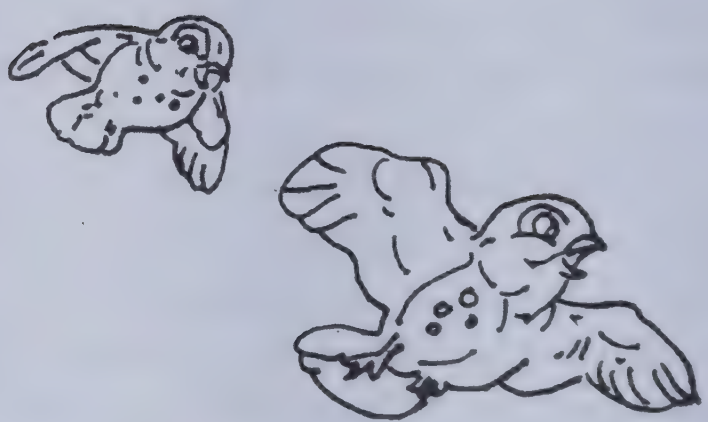
'Zing zing' went the soldiers' swords, but they did not catch the birds. Instead of chopping off the heads of Tuntuna and Tuntuni, the soldiers had chopped off the nose of the king.

Tuntuna and Tuntuni flew round and round the room, singing,

"Tuntuna, Tuntuni,
Tuntunis tun tun!
The nose of the king
Was cut, 'Zing zing zing!'
Tun tun, tun tun, tun tun."

Translated by KRANDAKAR ASHRAF HOSSAIN

Illustrated by SHUMANA HAQUE



India

I MUST FEED MY MOTHER

by
BADRI NARAYAN

Listen, listen carefully. Long, long ago, in a forest lived an elephant. He was big and strong, and his skin was as white as milk.

The white elephant had a mother whom he loved more than anything else in the world—more than himself, more than the sweet wild berries and fruit on the trees in the forest, more than the juicy tubers hidden in the ground.

The white elephant's mother was blind, but blind or not, is not a mother a mother? The white elephant took good care of her. He found a nice, cool cave for her. In front of the cave was a lake full of clear, shining water and full of lotuses. Water always makes an elephant's heart glad.

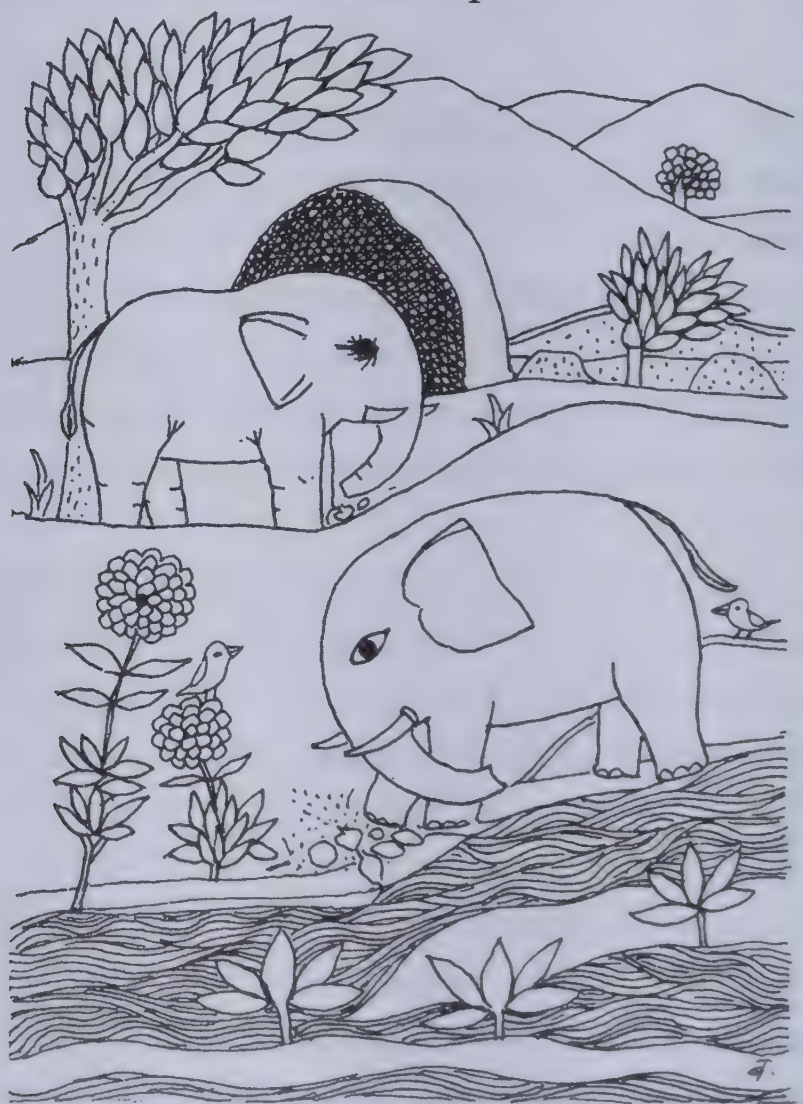
The white elephant would first feed his mother; only then would he eat. Whenever he could, he would tell her stories and tell her how the forest looked in the hot summer and during the monsoon when it poured. He would speak to her of the hills, of squirrels, birds,

and butterflies with beautiful wings. He would also tell her of flowers, big and small, of many colours.

The days passed. The rains came in time, the long grass blew in the wind. Monkeys chattered in the trees, and their children and their children's children swung from branch to branch.

The white elephant grew older and stronger. Yes, stronger, but gentler, and wiser, too.

Now, one day it so happened that a man who had come from the city of Benares lost his way in the forest. He sobbed and beat his head, crying, "Oh, it is all over with me! I will never be able to get out of this forest! Someone, save me, save me, please!"



The white elephant saw the man. "Poor man, " he said to himself, "Why does he weep? I must help him!"

The elephant walked towards the man, but he ran away in fear. The elephant followed him, and in his gentle voice said, "Friend, don't be afraid. I wish to help you. Tell me, why do you weep?"

The elephant had called him friend, so the man stopped and said, "I have passed seven days in this forest, and I still cannot find my way out of it!"

The elephant knelt down and said, "Climb up onto my back. I will carry you safely out of the forest, and put you on a path that will take you home."

And so, thanks to the elephant, the man reached his home in Benares.

Back in Benares, he heard the king's men announce loudly in the streets, "Listen, listen! The king's elephant is dead! The royal elephant is no more! The king wishes to have a new state elephant! Anyone willing to help the king find a suitable royal elephant will get a rich reward!"

"Aha," said the man, "Now is my chance to get rich!"

He went to the king and said, "My lord, I have seen a wonderful elephant in the forest. This elephant is big and handsome and fit for a king. His skin is a spotless white! Send some of your elephant trainers and soldiers with me. We will catch the elephant and bring him to you!"

"Take whoever you need," the king said. " I shall be glad to have such an elephant at my palace."

So the man set out for the forest, along with many elephant trainers and soldiers.

In the forest, the great white elephant was standing in front of his cave, in the cool water of the lake amidst many lotuses. The points of his tusks shone in the sun.

The man went up to the elephant, caught him by the trunk, and said, "You must come with me. If you will not, these elephant trainers and soldiers will drag you to Benares."

The elephant stood quietly. He knew he was stronger than the man, stronger than all the king's elephant trainers, stronger than all the king's soldiers. He knew that, if he wanted to, he could kill anyone who came to catch him.

"I do not wish to harm anyone," said the elephant to himself and stood with his head low.

And so, the very man to whom he had done a good turn caught him and, along with the elephant trainers and soldiers, took him to the city of Benares.

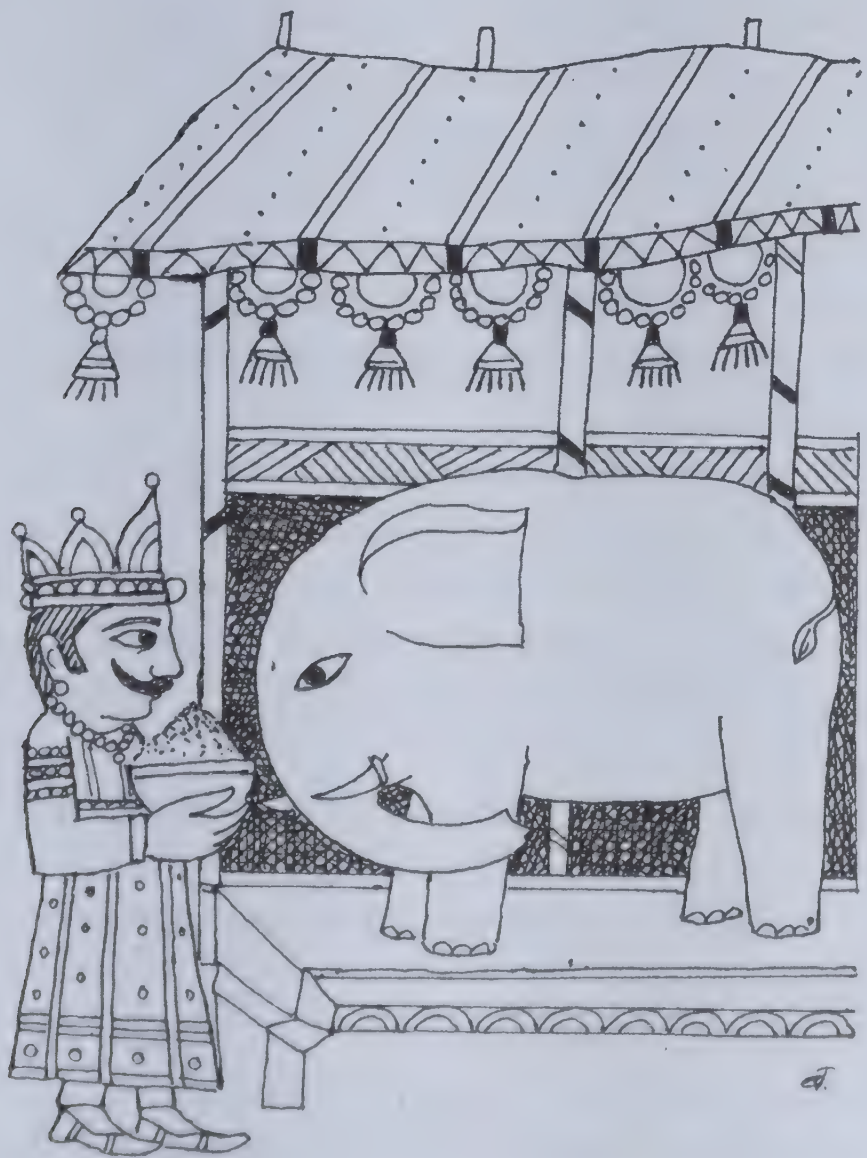
Alone and sad in her cave, the blind mother elephant tossed her head unhappily. "Many days have passed. Where is my son? What could have happened to him? He is so big and handsome. I hope he has not been caught by man. Oh, my son is not by my side to tell me about the trees and plants and grass and the coming rain. Now, indeed, I am blind, for my son was my pair of eyes."

An elephant trainer had run ahead, and on reaching the king's palace he said excitedly to the king, "A beautiful white elephant is coming! The most beautiful elephant in the world is coming!"

The king got up from his throne and called to his servants, "Decorate the city! Call the musicians! And

the conch-blowers! And the dancers! And the people of the city! And the little children! Make a big, wide stall for the elephant near the palace! Make it of many-coloured cloth! Decorate the bamboo-poles with silk, flags, and garlands of flowers! For my new royal elephant get the best rice in the city!"

After seven days the great white elephant arrived in Benares. The people of the city remarked, "How splendid! See how grandly he walks! How grandly he waves his ears! How his body shines! How noble he looks!"



The elephant was taken to his special stall, while music played and laughter and happy voices filled the air. The king greeted him, "Welcome, white elephant of the forest! Welcome!"

The king then offered him a golden bowl filled with cooked rice. "Eat," he said. "Eat, please!"

The elephant did not move. He stood straight and still. "Without feeding my mother, I do not eat," he said.

"Eat at least one morsel, for my sake, great elephant," said the king.

"No," said the elephant. "Without my mother, I eat nothing. My mother is blind. She must be pining for me, lying at the mouth of the cave. I can see her, sad and forlorn, beating her foot against the roots of a tree."

The king stood silent for a moment. Then, turning to his elephant-trainers and soldiers, he said, "Take the elephant back to the forest! Take him to his mother."

The nobles and people gathered there clapped and shouted with joy.

So the white elephant returned to the forest.

As he came to the lotus-lake near their cave, he drew some cool water in his silvery trunk, and when he saw his blind mother lying down on the floor of the cave, he sprayed the water on her body. She immediately stood up.

"What gentle rain blows into this cave?" She said. "Has my son come back?"

"I am back," answered the white elephant. "The king has set me free."

The blind mother was overjoyed to hear her son's voice. "May that king live long!" She said.

The white elephant fed his mother with wild fruit

and berries. Only then did he eat.

The days passed in peace and happiness.

In Benares, the king often thought of the great white elephant and his blind mother in the forest. "I wish I could stay near the wonderful white elephant and his mother," he said.

One day, the king built a city for himself near the lake of lotuses in the forest. Then every day, he would spend some time with the white elephant and his blind mother, bringing them fruit, roots, and flowers.

Illustrated by the author

Papua New Guinea

HOW THE CUSCUS LOST ITS EARS

(ANONYMOUS)

Once upon a time, a long, long time ago, there was a strange village in the middle of the jungle. There weren't any people living in this village.

There were just animals, but they lived in houses like us. There was a dog and a snake, a cuscus and a rat, a wallaby and a pig, and lots of other animals, too.

They were happy in the village, and they were all good friends. They had good houses and good gardens. In their gardens they had all the food they wanted. They had bananas and beans and taro.

Now in the village, the dog and the cuscus lived in the same house. They were good friends at that time. At that time too, the cuscus had very big ears. He liked his ears for they were the biggest ears in the village. They were bigger than the dog's ears and they were bigger than the rat's ears. They were bigger than the wallaby's ears and bigger than the pig's ears, too.

At first the dog and the cuscus worked hard in their garden, but as they got older the cuscus became lazy. Sometimes in the morning the dog would say to

his friend the cuscus, "Come on, friend. It's time to get out of bed. Look, the sun is up. It's time for us to go out and work in the garden."

But the cuscus would look up from his bed and say, "You go on friend and I'll come along later. I'm sick today, so I think I'll stay in bed for a while." Then he would turn over on his side and go back to sleep.

The dog liked his friend, so he would go off to the garden and work hard by himself all day. But the cuscus was only playing a trick on the dog. He wasn't sick at all. He just didn't like working. He liked staying in bed. He was very lazy.

After a while the cuscus became so lazy that he never went out to the garden. He would sleep in the bed till it was very late. Then he would get up and go outside and sit under a tall, bushy tree to wait for the dog to come home from the garden.

When the dog came home from working in the garden, he would have to light the fire, get the dinner ready and clean the house.

The lazy old cuscus didn't do anything to help his friend. He just stayed in bed or sat in a chair all day long. How lazy he was!

One day while the dog was working in the garden, he suddenly said to himself, "I'll fix that lazy friend of mine. I'll play a trick on him. He likes his big ears very much. I'll fix him."

That afternoon he left the garden early and went home as fast as he could. When he got home, the lazy, old cuscus was still asleep in bed.

The dog crept carefully into house, being careful not to make any noise, and got a long bit of string. Then

he crept carefully out of the house again. He didn't want to wake the cuscus.

At the back of the house there was a little river. The dog ran down to the river and stood by the water's edge. Then he took the string and tied it around his ears.

He tied the string very tight so that his ears were flat down on his head. He looked as if he had no ears at all. Then he looked in the water of the river to see that he looked all right. He was very pleased with his work.

Quickly he ran back to the house where the lazy cuscus was still sleeping soundly. He shook his friend the cuscus and said to him, "Wake up, my friend. I've got something to tell you. Come on, wake up."

The cuscus sat up with a start. "What's up?" He said, looking at the dog.

"Why, look at you! What is wrong with you? Where are your ears?"

"I've cut them off," said the dog. "You never go into the village to see the other animals. They have all cut their ears off. They say that only foolish animals have ears now. They say that when you have big ears they fall down and you cannot hear. When they see you, they will all laugh and say, 'What a shame! What a shame! Poor cuscus! He is a poor, foolish animal. Look at his ears. It is a great shame to see such a foolish animal.' Yes, that's what they'll say to you."

"I am not a foolish animal," said the cuscus. "I am clever, and I will cut my ears off, too."

He jumped out of bed and ran out back to get a knife. He took the knife and cut off his ears. Then he came back to the dog and said,

"There! I'm not foolish. I have cut off my ears, too. I cut them off with a knife."

When the dog saw him, he laughed. "What a shame! What a shame!" He cried. "Look at this. I have just played a trick on you. You are a very foolish animal, my friend.

The dog untied the string and his ears stood up on his head again. The cuscus was very surprised to see this. He was very ashamed of himself, too. "Oh!" He said. "I am so foolish and ashamed."

He ran out of the door of the house and climbed up the trunk of the tallest tree in the jungle. He climbed right to the top.

That is why the cuscus stays up in the top of the trees today. He is afraid that all the other animals will laugh at him. He only comes down from the trees to get his food when it is very dark. He knows then that no one will see him.

Illustrated by MARLON KUELINAD

Iran

OLD MAN AND OLD WOMAN

by
ZOHREH PARIROKH

Once upon a time, in a very small house there lived an old man and old woman. They had no children or animals. The only friend and company the old man had was the old woman, and the old man was all the old woman had.

One afternoon, as always, the old man and old woman were sitting on the veranda. The old woman was knitting and the old man was making a tray out of a piece of wood. While he was cutting the wood, he said, "How good it is that we don't have a farm, otherwise we would always be thinking of ploughing and harvesting. Then, if there was a flood or storm we would lose our farm and be very unhappy..."

The old woman replied, "Oh, it's good that we don't have a farm, and I am happy that we don't keep a dog. If we had a dog and at night a leaf would fall from a tree, it would bark and wake us up..."

The old man said, "You are right! In my opinion, it is also good that we don't have any sheep. If we had a

sheep, I would have to take it up to pasture. Then we would be attacked and eaten by a wolf, and you would be left all alone..."

The old woman said, "It's very good that we don't have any sheep."

That night, when the old woman's eyes were tired and the old man was so tired that he was unable to hold the knife in his hands, they stopped work. They dined and went to bed.

They were not quite asleep when the old man said, "There is a sound from the roof."

The old woman said, "No, I have heard nothing. Be at ease and go to sleep!"

The old man agreed, but as soon as he had fallen asleep, the old woman's scream made him jump. "I heard a noise from the yard. Get up and see what it is."

The old woman and old man were frightened.

They went to the window and looked out at the yard, but they saw nothing.

The old woman sighed and said, "If we had a dog, it would have barked and let us know if there was someone in the yard."

The old man said, "Now we have to go and look in the yard ourselves."

The old woman put her scarf on and the old man took the lantern. They went out and looked everywhere, but there was no one in the yard.

The man laughed and said, "Tonight we have had a lot of mystery!"

They went back inside, but they were not yet asleep when the old woman jumped at the old man's scream. "Get up, old woman, get up! The noise is from the roof."

They both got up, but all was peace and quiet. Suddenly the old woman felt sad, and she said quietly, "Oh, old man! If we had a sheep, it would baa-baa, and we would not feel so lonely."

They left the room together. The old man took a ladder and climbed up. When he got to the top, he shouted in fright, "I can't see anywhere. I am afraid I may fall off the roof in the dark!"

The old woman shouted, "Wait there till your eyes get used to the darkness." After a little while she asked, "What is up there?"

The old man said, "Nothing but darkness. But wait..."

The old woman waited, but the old man said nothing.

The old woman shouted, "Oh, old man! What is happening up there? Why don't you speak?"

No reply was heard. The old woman was frightened. She climbed up the ladder, but before she got to the top, she saw the old man standing on the roof and laughing.

The old woman said, "Old man, why did you frighten me? Why did you not answer me, and why are you laughing now?"

The old man said, "Let me come down and tell you."

The old woman climbed down the ladder and the old man followed her.

When the old man got to the ground, the old woman saw he was holding a white kitten in his arms. "Look! I think it has lost its mother. It is scared. I didn't want to leave it all alone up there."

The old woman sighed and took the kitten in her arms. "It's very small. It has to have milk. If we want to keep it, we have to give it milk."

The old man said, "Tomorrow, early in the morning I will go and buy a sheep."

The old woman replied, "The sheep needs fresh grass, so tomorrow we will plough our garden in order to have food for our sheep."

The old man said, "We also have to think about a dog to take care of our sheep and the garden."

The old man and old woman went back to the room happily and made a place for the kitten. Then, they sat and talked about all the work they had to do the next day. They talked and talked until they fell asleep, such a sweet and peaceful sleep.

Translated by CYRUS TAHBAZ

Illustrated by MIR-ALI BAROOTIAN

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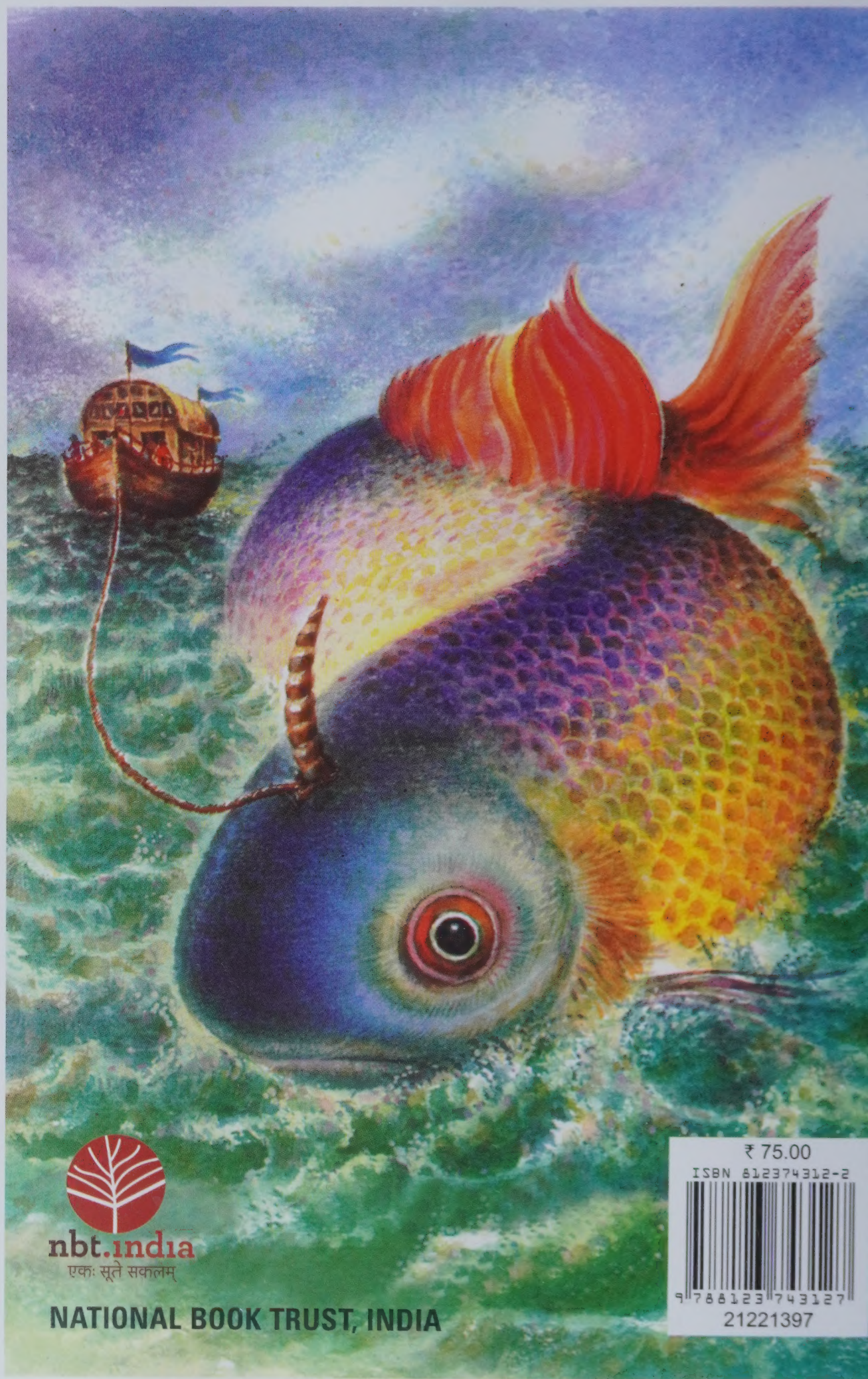

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